

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Caitlin Tenaglia, and I am a speech-language pathologist working in SAU 16. Currently, I am on unpaid maternity leave with my second child. It is disheartening to think that in the year 2026, I need to take time away from my child to write to my state legislators about the detrimental effects of segregating students with disabilities in New Hampshire.

Disabled students deserve to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities must be placed in the least restrictive environment. This means they should be educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent possible. Segregating students solely for financial reasons would undoubtedly violate IDEA and serve as a disservice to all students in New Hampshire. Every student benefits from being in inclusive classrooms; education is not binary, and we see students along a continuum of needs. When teachers differentiate instruction to accommodate this range of needs, even those not formally identified as needing support benefit from the inclusive environment.

Furthermore, students with disabilities are entitled to access the same extracurricular activities as their non-disabled peers. Will these students be transported back to their home schools for these activities?

It is equally important for non-disabled students to interact with peers who have complex needs, as this fosters compassion, empathy, and a deeper understanding of diversity in our communities.

I firmly oppose HB 1221 and sincerely hope that we will continue to support our disabled students with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Tenaglia