

To the honorable chair and members of the House Judiciary committee:

My name is Andrew Harmon, and I am a legally blind resident of New Hampton, NH. I have been a long-time client of Vocational Rehabilitation's Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, though I finally managed to sustain employment long enough to have my case closed. I have struggled for years to find employment, both during my time as a college student at Keene State College from 2004 to 2009, as well as after when I lived in Keene for 8 and a half years starting in 2012. If it were not for Vocational Rehabilitation (NH VR) and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), I would not have been able to attend Keene State College as they provided financial assistance both directly through tuition assistance and indirectly in the form of vital equipment and accessibility software – which allowed me to read textbooks and transform in-class materials into a form I could read electronically. If section 504 were to evaporate, I could not guarantee I would have received the same level of assistance, as support would not have been available without the backing of the program. I would not have had the education I had. I also would not have been able to make the contacts I did that led to my current employment as I would never have worked with the employment agency "Work Opportunities Unlimited" that my counselor recommended during my job search, which led to finding the clients I now work with.

HB 1593 would ensure that this vital program continues in our great state, regardless of the external forces that are obsessed with eroding valuable programs like Vocational Rehabilitation and SBVI. I strongly urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass this critical piece of legislation. If you have any questions, I can be reached either via email at andrewjharmon@gmail.com, or by cell phone at (603) 992-4053 between 9 AM and 9 PM Monday through Thursday or 9 AM to 4 PM on Fridays.

Sincerely

Andrew J. Harmon, concerned legally blind citizen

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