

## Testimony- Tracy Sherman SB 926

My name is Tracy Sherman from Hyattsville in PG County. I am a single mom to my 14-year-old daughter Jaelynn with multiple disabilities including learning disabilities and stage 3 chronic kidney disease. On behalf of Jaelynn and all of the other kids out there, PLEASE support SB926 as favorable which focuses on burden of proof in due process cases. We and our lawyer are about to file for a due process hearing in the very immediate future. I have spent over \$105,000 over the past 10 years trying to get Jaelynn the interventions and accommodations she needs according to multiple outside specialists.

In 2019, the school suddenly changed her IEP code from specific learning disability to emotional disability with no new evaluations, assessments or any other proof. Now, 4 years later the school has STILL not provided any proof of emotional disability. No behavior assessment was ever completed and no behavior plan was ever put in place. She has been forced into a behavioral school where she DOES NOT BELONG and is not getting the accommodations she needs. She is reading at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I had to provide outside proof that she has dyslexia, however the school has not been held accountable to provide proof of emotional disability. It should not take a lawyer and thousands of dollars for a child with kidney disease to be able to use the restroom, a child with dyslexia to get daily reading interventions, or me to clear my name after a teacher lied to police to try to get a restraining order on me.

We are Latina, bilingual, and fortunate enough to be able to pay for this fight, but it makes me sick to think about the other families out there struggling because they can't afford a lawyer, don't speak much English, or know their rights. Please support this bill to even the playing field for all families. FAPE should not depend on a family's income.