

Opportunities for Too Few? Oversight of Federal Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities

Bill Number:

Hearing Date: October 20, 2005, 2:00 pm

Location: SD106

Witness:

Ms. Kate Bartlett

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Student

Testimony

Hello, my name is Kate Bartlett. I am testifying today on behalf of the National Down Syndrome Society, which advocates to improve the lives of 350,000 children and adults with Down syndrome and their families. I am a student at Middlesex Community College in Bedford Massachusetts and am working on my Associate Degree. I want what everyone wants. I want to be happy, have friends and be able to live independently in the world.

I grew up in Arlington, Massachusetts and attended regular education classes in our neighborhood schools. Growing up, I was a girl scout, played on soccer, basketball and softball teams; sang in a chorus and took dance classes. In high school, the work got harder but I took college prep classes and because of that was able to pass the MCAS and graduate with my class in 2004. In high school, I was on the swim team and got 4 varsity letters in swimming. I was also a co-captain in my senior year. I performed and traveled with the high school chorus. We went on great trips to Quebec, the Hudson River Valley, and Charleston, South Carolina. I loved singing in the chorus and hope to join another one. I also work out at our local gym and have since I was a freshman in high school.

Last year I attended Lesley College's Threshold Program for students with learning disabilities. I lived in a dorm in Cambridge, attended class three days a week and was an intern in a Harvard Square optical store two days a week. Although I did well in classes and at work (the owner wanted to hire me last summer but I already had a job), there were roommate issues and I left after one semester. In January I enrolled at Middlesex Community College and that is working great. Right now I am taking a six credit English class and a voice class.

I work during summers and school vacations. My jobs included an office support position in the benefits department of a Boston staffing company and a support associate at Macy's. In the office position I put together benefits packages and I was responsible for labeling, copying, filing and shredding. I enjoyed the office position and made some nice friends.

I was fortunate to receive two scholarships from Arlington High and the National Down Syndrome Society's Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Scholarship Fund. College is expensive, it's nice to have help.

I am happy. As you can see my life is pretty normal. I have a loving family, caring

friends and a life I enjoy. I am not sure what I want to do for a career in the future. I hope to figure that out in college. I know I want to have a career that I enjoy. I want to love going to work everyday and be great at whatever I choose to do. I want to continue making friends, participating in social and cultural activities, and live on my own again some day.