

H.177 & H.178

TESTIMONY OF SONIA VIVAS

I live in Somerville. I stand here today, a June graduate of Somerville High School. I made it even though I had everything stacked against me. My 8<sup>th</sup> grade year was the turning point in my life. I was a general education student without a disciplinary record up to my court case. I was expelled at the request of the accusing student's parents and wasn't offered any alternative education services. In order for me to receive any sort of education I had to seek help from Mass. Advocates for Children. At their suggestion I had an evaluation for special education done and I was found to have special education needs. If it wasn't for that finding I would have been permanently expelled from school without a way to receive any education. But thanks to my IEP I stand here 4 years later, a high school graduate with honors, and a future college student. Please support these bills. Thank you.