**Personal Testimony**

State: New Jersey

Institution: The College of New Jersey

Name: Connor Mullin

Dear New Jersey, Congressional Delegation:

 My name is Connor Mullin, and I am a recent graduate of the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) with a bachelor’s degree in political science.

During my undergraduate career, I eagerly accepted the opportunity to conduct an original research project for my senior thesis. I spent months constructing a data set of biographical information on every state high court justice in the country. However, when it came time to use statistical software to analyze the data and test my theory, none of the statistical packages that TCNJ had were accessible with my computer’s screen reader software. The math department of the tutoring center assured me that they would find someone who could run the rather complex calculations I had in mind, but they never followed through despite multiple follow ups. With the department unresponsive, I did not have access to an assistant with the desired knowledge base that could offset my inability to access the software. This meant that I lost much control over the data analysis—the most crucial part of the project where my theory, which I developed over a semester and a half of research, would be finally tested. Ultimately, I had to seek the help of a fellow political science major competent enough with statistics to assist me. This, however, had to be done at the last minute and involved me, my professor, and this student spending ample extra time to hurriedly identify and fix problems with the data, run tests, and analyze the results. I constantly felt that I did not have the ability to carefully troubleshoot problems with my own data because I did not have access to it, and these difficulties reduced the time that I had to write the final paper and work on other course assignments.

In order for people with disabilities to be equal participants in society, we need to remove all relevant barriers to equal education. Failing to do so will allow low expectations about people with disabilities’ capacity to achieve equally in their academic, personal, and professional lives to persist. I urge Congress to support legislation involving equal access to education. Voluntary guidelines will benefit both administrators, faculty, and students of higher education. By creating these guidelines, colleges and universities will then have direction in providing sufficient and equivalent course material to print-disabled students.

Thank you for taking the time to read what I must say, and I hope you will remember my story when it comes time to vote on this kind of legislation.

Sincerely,

Connor Mullin

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