

**TO: General Assembly Government Administration and Elections
Committee**
RE: Raised House Bill 7144
**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BOARD OF EDUCATION AND
SERVICES FOR CITIZENS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM
DISORDERS**
DATE: March 16, 2007

Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso, and Members of the Government
Administration and Elections Committee:

As a parent with an eighth grade ASD student I commend members of CSEA/SEIU Local 2001 for their diligent efforts to make this news State agency to serve Autism Spectrum Disorders a reality. We need programs out there to educate the work force as well as programs to help teach independent living skills for those with ASD. Yes, there are some camps out there; however, they are so costly making it impossible for the average family to send their children there.

Each year brings new challenges. I wonder how the transition will go each year in school. Next year we are faced with High School which will bring a big change for us. I also always have on the back of my mind what the future will bring for him. Much of the burden falls upon me to educate the new staff on ASD. For some Professional Staff, working with my son has been the first experience they have had working with an ASD student. You can see it is essential we have training for not only school personnel. It does not stop there. Parents also need education and support for their families. As you can well imagine it can be a challenge living with a child/adult with ASD. As our children transform into young adults we are constantly being faced with new challenges

as parents. This Agency would mean so much to the families with ASD members such as ours.

I urge the General Assembly to make an investment in the new State agency to serve Autism Spectrum Disorders. After all, isn't it beneficial to our great state to help all children gain the independent living skills needed to lead a productive life after school?

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