

I would like to testify in support of Raised House Bill 5666 -- Expansion of the ASD Pilot Program

My name is Cathy Adamczyk. I live in Ansonia, CT. My son, Michael, is 18 years old and has classical autism. He is eligible for services from the Department of Developmental Services. I owe much of Michael's success and the ability of us to be able to continue to care for Michael at home due to the services we have been receiving from DDS. Having four other children, and having personally undergone seven major surgeries in the past 11 years, our family has relied heavily on DDS services. Since my son already qualifies for services through DDS, why do I care if those adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders without Mental Retardation get services as they transition to adulthood? Because I would hope that all parents getting services for their children would support my family if the tables were turned, and my son was the person with the IQ 70 or above. With an IQ of 69, Michael is very close to that "magical 70" number. If his IQ goes up one point to 70, does that mean he no longer needs assistance in life? No, it does not. Michael, like all individuals on the spectrum, has great difficulty with social, safety and daily living skills and adapting to any changes in his routine.

I am lucky enough to know several of the individuals that participate in the Pilot program. These adults and their families are grateful to be able to participate, and are very happy with the results. Participants are involved in social skills groups. They are getting jobs, learning daily living skills, participating in activities in their communities, and becoming better able to lead more independent lives. My hope is that all adults with ASD in CT are able to access needed services to lead productive, independent lives, fully included in their communities. It is time that all families stop feeling "lucky" that their loved one with ASD has an IQ of 69 or less so they can receive services through DDS. We need to expand this program so that all adults with ASD in the state are eligible to receive services either through meeting the requirements of DDS (an IQ less than 70) or by becoming eligible through the Pilot program. We need to continue to expand the Pilot program until it is no longer a Pilot program, but a statewide program open to all individuals with ASD who do not have mental retardation.

Thank you.

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