



301

February 4, 2009

Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 301, mandating insurance coverage for people with autism spectrum disorders.

We began this process last year, and you heard the horror stories of financial burden from many people impacted by autism. Today, you will hear many of the same stories. Parents paying up to \$5,000 out of pocket for a medical diagnosis, up to \$150 an hour for forty hours weekly of Applied Behavior Analysis as recommended by a physician and possibly upwards of \$120 per month on medically prescribed drugs for the treatment of autism.

And you have heard and will hear stories about families who simply have to opt out of these critical medical options because they are simply too costly.

Autism is first and foremost a medical condition. It needs to be treated medically, just as any other MEDICAL condition. Its treatment should be covered by insurance just as any other MEDICAL condition is.

Make no mistake, families with autism have insurance. We pay insurance premiums. The fact that we are being denied services that should be covered under insurance plans is nothing short of discrimination.

You will hear the myths about insurance premiums skyrocketing as a result of the possible passage of this legislation. You will see evidence to the contrary. Evidence that indicates the rate would roughly be the equivalent to \$4 or \$5, the same as what we were paying for a gallon of gas in Connecticut just less than six months ago.

It is time for Connecticut to lead the charges that will end this discrimination.

Thank you for your time.

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