

Diane Lublin 5558

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

As the parent of a nineteen year old son with autism, I am asking you to support Bill HB5558. We are currently on the wait list to receive services for our son but we have been told to anticipate a four year wait. I can not begin to tell you the number of nights I lay awake worrying about my son's future. Please help put the supports in place so my son can lead an independent and fulfilling life.

My son was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. Since that time my husband and I have worked hard to help our son get the services that he needs. Conservatively, we have already spent a quarter of a million dollars. He is only 19 years old. Through the years we have supplemented his school program with outside therapies and activities. Psychological and some medical services are provided my doctors that do not have agreements with insurance companies. This has had a huge impact on our financial health and we worry what the future holds. Autism has not gone away just since he has left public school. It is a lifelong disability.

Our son is enrolled in his first year of college and is doing well academically. He has had over 14 years of intensive work learning how to do school well. Unfortunately he has not had that same success building relationships or holding down a job. He has been fired from a grocery store where he worked as a bagger and had a job coach! We need the services of BRS! Although he had a working evaluation with them a year ago, they still have not been able to find him employment. Most parents I know with young adults with autism share the same story.

We do have a private mentor working with our son 6 hours per week since the fall. It has made a huge difference! She helps him work on so many skills but there is still so much that needs to be accomplished for him to be able to hold down a job, be part of his community, and live independently. My son wants to contribute to society and is very bright with so much to offer. He needs the help of the services that are provided through the autism program to get him there.

Please help the adults with autism who live in Connecticut to obtain the services they need to live a productive life!

Thank you.

Diane Lublin
172 Catherine Drive
Rocky Hill CT 06067

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Diane Lublin
dianelublin@gmail.com