

To the Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing to share with you the extreme need for expansion of services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders. My name is Karen Linder, and I live in Clinton, CT. I am contacting you because I am very concerned for the future of my son, Henry. Henry was diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder when he was 9 years old. Henry has an intelligence quotient of 100 and a verbal IQ of 112. He also has learning disabilities which he struggles in an outplacement school setting to overcome. Henry is now 16 and has anxiety about his future. He is aware of his differences and is struggling to prepare himself for a future which includes post secondary education, meaningful employment and independent living. Due to Henry's "high functioning" position within the Autism Spectrum, and Connecticut's lack of services for adults who do not have Intellectual Disability, but who do have Autism Spectrum Disorder, in 5 years Henry will be 21 years old and will not qualify for services. Today Henry receives support and services via special education/IDEA. Henry's goals for his future includes working part time while attending a two year college program for criminal justice. He is unlikely to be able to reach those goals without appropriate supports. Henry will not qualify for services in Connecticut's current system.

I am writing to you about Bill No. 5558 which would expand services for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Today there is a very limited pilot program, with an extremely long waiting list. Given Henry's intellect, he falls through the cracks as services are only available for those with more pronounced behaviors and challenges. I urge you to support this bill. Henry can live and work in the community as a productive member of society, but without the appropriate supports. This bill will allow for Henry to access these supports and live up to his fullest potential.

You can reach me at 860-287-3085 or [karen.w.linder@gmail.com](mailto:karen.w.linder@gmail.com). While I am unable to attend the public hearing on 3/19/2014 and my written testimony is being sent past the 3/18/2014, 3 p.m. deadline, both are due to the short notice I had of the opportunity and my work obligations, and I ask that my voice be heard via this email.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Very truly yours,

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