

March 12, 2014

Support of HB 5558

Dear Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Johnson and Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 5558, particularly Section 2.

This new section 2 would establish a pilot program that will allow for the individuals with the highest level of need who are difficult to place to have opportunities to receive a high level of service from a provider who has clinical expertise in providing applied behavior analysis.

Historically, these individuals have been placed out of state or in public institutions. Our public institutions have been, or are in the process of being closed and are not accepting any new cases. DDS will no longer place people out of state. Our hospitals are not equipped to deal with these individuals except in acute situations of short duration. This means that there are very few, and in some cases no options for some individuals with very high levels of need.

There now exists a huge gap in services for people with autism and developmental disabilities. This often means that families are left to deal with the most challenging behaviors with very insufficient assistance and supports.

Connecticut needs another option to help these people. This bill would not only help to close the gap, but would be less expensive than sending people to out-of-state hospitals and will enable children to remain close to their families.

Yours truly,

Suzanne Letso, M.A., BCBA

Chief Executive Officer

Connecticut Center for Child Development

95 Wolf Harbor Road

Milford, CT 06461

And

Residence:

93 Poverty Hollow Road

Newtown, CT 06470