



Testimony Submitted to the Human Services Committee:

In Support of H.B. No. 6860: An Act Concerning a Pilot Project to Improve Transitional Services for Employable Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Submitted By: Helen Bosch, Chief Executive Officer, Vista Vocational & Life Skills Center

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Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Helen Bosch, Chief Executive Officer of Vista Vocational & Life Skills Center, a fully accredited, nationally recognized educational and training program offering an array of services to assist individuals with disabilities achieve personal success. On behalf of Vista and its clientele, I would like to state support for H.B. 6860, An Act Concerning a Pilot Project to Improve Transitional Services for Employable Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Being an organization that serves individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, we are aware of how difficult it can be for these individuals to gain paid employment. As I mentioned, our mission at Vista is to help individuals with disabilities achieve personal success. Success is defined as living with dignity and as independently and productively as possible.

For the majority of our members, productivity and employment are key components in that equation. However, there aren't enough opportunities available for individuals on the spectrum, especially those who are not "high-functioning." While we fully support this bill, our hope is that the pilot program would be designed to benefit all abilities on the autism spectrum, not just high-functioning individuals.

Additionally, we know through our 25 years of experience, that the key to successful employment is not getting the job – but keeping it! This bill would allow funding to pay for job related supports which are vital to ongoing employment success. It does little good to put into place mechanisms for getting a job if the ongoing supports are not in place. Vista has successfully utilized ongoing employment opportunity supports at the average cost to the State of Connecticut of \$2,339 per year, per individual served. This small annual sum keeps an individual employed, productive and successful. It benefits the state as more employed individuals means more taxpayers. It's a win-win.

We respectfully urge you vote in favor of H.B. 6860. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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