

## SB 487 "AAC transportation of Adult Students in transition Programs"

Transportation Committee  
February 9, 2015

Good Morning Senator Maynard, Senator Leone and honorable members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Chris McNaboe I am CEO of Horizons a non profit organization providing services to children and adults with special needs for over 35 years.

I am here today in support of SB 487. As a Transition Education Service provider we regularly work with students 18 years and older. These students have finished the requirements for graduation and are still entitled to school funded service until they turn 21. Schools are mandated to provide transitions supports to prepare these students for adult life and the world of work. At Horizons that means students can sample a variety of potential careers and see which ones are a good fit. We then try to match the student with an employer so at 21, they have a paying job in the community.

We are all for safety. As an agency regulated by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS), we follow and are scrutinized by DDS in a host of areas including regulations and recommendations in our hiring and staff training such as : checking the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry, Sexual offenders registry verification, back ground checks- including criminal , social security and driving record. Potential staff also are given a full job description that must be signed off by their physician insuring they can perform all essential aspects of the job. Our insurance carrier requires annual DMV checks for all staff , regular defensive driver training and the "Pink Filing" at DMV that indicates our insurance coverage. We keep extensive vehicle logs for usage and maintenance and replace our vehicles every 4 years.

The Student Transportation endorsement does not mean we have better drivers. There is no skills test to get it. The Student Transportation registration does not make our vehicles safer, it's just more expensive and redundant to what we already do. And all of the requirements are unfunded mandates to us as a non profit agency that is already struggling to make ends meet.

Students with special needs have battled labels and public misconceptions all of their lives. Not many people realize the skills and abilities they have until they spend time and really get to know them. Driving an adult student to a job interview in a vehicle marked CARRING SCHOOL CHILDREN does not convey ability. It labels them , one more time as different and does not support the fact that they are adults.

On our agency brochure we say "When some encounter people with disabilities, they only see limitations. We believe in broader Horizons". Let's not label and limit our Transition students as we send them off into adult jobs and lives.