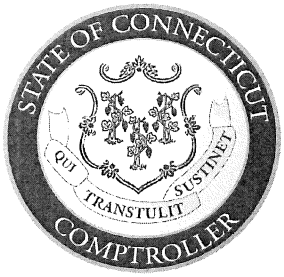
KEVIN LEMBO
STATE COMPTROLLER

MARTHA CARLSON
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE *of the* STATE COMPTROLLER
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-177

Written Testimony
Comptroller Kevin Lembo
February 27, 2015

Concerning
R.B. 6737 AA Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning Transitional Services for Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Senator Fonfara, Representative Carpino, Senator Kissel and Representative Mushinsky:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on *Raised Bill 6737 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee Concerning Transitional Services for Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).*

As a father of two sons who are affected by ASD, I support this legislation. It was not long ago that my two oldest sons reached an age where they needed to transition into the community, find employment and live independently. I remember very clearly that, as a family, we were feeling our way in the dark.

Autism isn't a "thing," but rather a spectrum of abilities and challenges. When seeking one resource, your child may be deemed "too disabled" – or when seeking another resource, they may be deemed "not disabled enough." At such a critical time, figuring out what resources were available was frustrating.

Both of my sons ultimately made their transition to adulthood successfully -- as both of them are working and living independently. However, had coordinated transition resources been available, it could have saved my family, and I assume other families, a great deal of time and resources.

This legislation recognizes the challenges facing so many. Among its priorities, this proposal will provide measures to help with the transition of young adults into the community and workforce. It will also establish a bill of rights for young people and the families who care for them at a time when they have access to limited opportunities and services.

I appreciate the legislature making this important step to address the needs of the growing population of individuals with ASD. This proposal will also continue to raise awareness of the

Committee's findings that those with ASD can live successful independent lives if they have the right support.

I urge its passage.

Thank you for your consideration.