

Senate Health Policy Committee

Chair, Senator Marleau

Vice-Chair Robertson

Senator Emmons

Senator Hune

Senator Jones

Senator Schuitmaker

Senator Warren

Senator Gleason

February 29th, 2012

Dear Members of the Senate Health Policy Committee,

We are writing today to request that you vote against allowing SB981, SB414 and SB 415 out of committee at this time. We are doing so due to the nature of these bills and we feel they do not meet the needs of the entire disability community and also they do not have provisions in them to meet the needs of all individuals living with autism.

Our son Nicholas is a twenty year old young man who is living with autism. He is doing very well having been diagnosed with severe autism at age three. We have sought various supports and services, both medical and educational for him since his diagnosis. He still however needs medical services and supports for his diagnosis and is improving as each year goes on.

We write today because we feel SB 981 sends a wrong message by you as legislators. You are allowing the discrimination of insurers to continue to happen, are giving them tax dollars to do so, but only for those individuals with ASD. It's discriminatory for every other individual with a disability that is not covered and being denied access to insurance. If an individual with autism has a dual diagnosis of a mental health disorder, Fragile X, or Rhatt Syndrome, or a variety of other disabilities not covered, then what will happen when they seek services. They most likely will not be covered.

Additionally the two bills specific to providing services we feel should not limit what an attending medical professional should provide, should not list any specific intervention like ABA which the professionals are not licensed under BCBA's to deliver services in MI, and also because there are age limits for services. We know adults with ASD who are getting diagnosed over age 18 and will need services as well. Our son also still needs services as a twenty year old and those could be for behavioral interventions.

So we ask at this time that this committee vote no to move these bills out of session and also work with those agencies that support individuals with autism in Michigan rather than those that have been allowed to be involved in this process. As members of the Arc of Michigan, the Autism Society of Michigan, the Macomb/St. Clair County Chapter and Oakland County Chapters of ASA, we feel these groups, along with United Cerebral Palsy and other Michigan membership groups should be allowed to represent the autism community.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We worked today and could not get the day off to attend the meeting with the late notice of it occurring due to the nature of our jobs. We would like to ask for an additional hearing as well to allow for more planning by individuals and organizations to attend before these bills are moved out of committee for votes.

Respectfully,

Andrew Gammicchia

Carolyn Gammicchia

Nicholas Gammicchia

Alexander Gammicchia

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