

Submitter: Carolyn Pasquarella

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

Co-Chairs Senator Steiner and Rep Sanchez, Members of the Committee:

Hello,

My name is Carolyn Pasquarella. I am a mother to two Autistic children and have always struggled to find childcare that was accepting and qualified to take care of them once they were no longer in elementary school. There are simply no programs that I am aware of that are available for middle school age children who have disabilities like this. This results in many parents often not working. This lack of childcare not only affects us economically, but socially. Often children with disabilities have a harder time making and keeping friends and the lack of after school care and activities only increases the social divide that they experience which then leads to loneliness and depression as they don't have the friends that many other children have.

If there were more inclusive after school programs for children with and without disabilities it would make a huge positive impact for both as the neurotypical children would be able to get to know the children in a less stressful environment and increase the inclusion of these children. I urge you to prioritize and invest in childcare in the upcoming budget to make response and affordable care accessible to families like mine.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Pasquarella