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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce
Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3053

Thank you for reading this testimony. I wanted to state support for this bill. An overnight camp for children who use speech generating devices is a crucial opportunity for these kids to build independence, confidence, and social connections in a supportive environment. Many children who rely on assistive technology face daily communication barriers, which can lead to isolation and frustration. Traditional camps are often not designed with their needs in mind, making it difficult for them to fully participate. At this camp, they are surrounded by peers and staff who understand their unique challenges, creating a space where they can express themselves freely, develop friendships, and experience the joy of independence.

The camp is also a powerful learning experience for graduate students training in speech language pathology and related fields. By working closely with campers, they gain hands-on clinical experience that deepens their understanding of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in real-world settings. This immersive experience shapes them into more skilled and compassionate professionals, which benefits future AAC users as well.

Families, too, find a vital support system at camp. Parents and caregivers often feel isolated in their experiences. Many have reported not feeling included in their public school communities themselves. But through this community, they can connect, share resources, and support one another. The camp is not a getaway but rather a transformative experience for campers, future clinicians, and families alike.