

Submitter: Nicole Collings

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Dear Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

As the parent of two children with multiple disabilities, I am requesting and urging you to fully fund the existing regional family networks including Creating Opportunities.

My children have experienced school trauma and are currently unable to access a traditional education setting. They have been othered by their peers. There are few places they can access in the community, either academically or socially, which doesn't result in negative experiences.

As you can imagine, this is incredibly isolating and lonely for my children and for our family. As a result we have struggled with our mental health and wellbeing. I had to take a year off from my professional career in order to support our family through crisis.

Fortunately for us, we found Creating Opportunities which welcomed my family with open arms no questions asked. They provided us with free access to family-friendly events including health and safety trainings, as well as play-based activities where my children could feel safe to be themselves, to try new things, and to make friends. Creating Opportunities provided us with free trainings and resources and empowered us to take care of ourselves and help others too. Through Creating Opportunities we have found connection, community, and hope.

Please support SB 5526 and fully fund the regional family networks, so families like mine can receive the resources and supports they desperately need.

With appreciation,

Nicole Collings

Parent and Creating Opportunities Regional Family Network Member