

Submitter: Alisha Overstreet

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

Good morning, Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Honorable members of the House Committee on Rules.

My name is Alisha Overstreet. As many of you may already know, I am a council member on SOCAC in the role of family representative for families with children and youth with ID/DD.

I will not speak in support nor opposition of this bill due to my role on the council, but if you'd like to understand my perspective on this bill, I urge you to visit the SOCAC YouTube channel and listen to the council meetings starting with the December full council meeting.

Of course, lawyers advocating for the system will tell the public the current law is not clear and too restrictive, while lawyers advocating for disability rights will argue the opposite.

Quite frankly, I understand why this bill exists.

What I don't understand is why I put my name and reputation on the line to advocate so ferociously for caregivers to voice what supports and services they need when bureaucracies and the legislative process can simply ignore any of our requests if, and then simply blame a "fiscal" or "the other side" for failing to keep key components for oversight in a bill that's been so contentious.

I don't understand why I put in the effort to reach out to lawmakers to advocate for families like mine but only a select few seem to be genuinely interested in our experiences and needs, and even fewer take me and my fellow caregivers seriously.

Families like mine don't have the luxury of accessing expensive, high profile lobbyist. We don't get paid to come here and testify. We don't care about partisan politics. We don't care if you're a Democrat, Republican, Progressive, or Conservative.

We simply want our voices heard, acknowledged, AND validated. We want our children, our families, to have access to services that are not merely based on behaviorist approaches.

Family members have suggested fiscally responsible and neuroscience based solutions on multiple occasions and to multiple entities, but those have yet to be

consistently taken serious, let alone adopted for our children OR staff to benefit from them.

Honestly, I'm glad the education portion was taken out, because it gives me hope that I and other advocates have yet another chance to convince key decision-making partners to invest in neuroscience-aligned education and mental health services.

And I'm always available to be a starting resource for this conversation.

Thank you.

Alisha Overstreet