

The Honorable Rachel Jones  
206 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

March 1, 2022

Dear Delegates R. Jones, Brooks, Foley, Hill, Patterson, and Proctor,

I write this correspondence to urge you to pass the HB 1121, Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Countless studies show autism prevalence in the United States has increased significantly, making autism awareness, education, and acceptance critical. The stigmas associated with autism spectrum disorder create disparity that cause individuals living with the disorder to be overlooked and misrepresented. Individuals living with autism may exhibit non-threatening behaviors such as: pacing, talking to oneself, not making eye contact, have extremely delayed-responses, exhibit avoidance, or may walk away. In some cases, the individual may even be non-verbal. As a result, they are misunderstood and are at a higher risk of being hurt or victimized.

Now more than ever, it is important for individuals living with autism to be able to safely live, work, and function independently within their communities.

Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder on driver's licenses, identification cards, and vehicle registration plates will help to ensure the safety of individuals living on the spectrum. Law enforcement officers, first responders, community workers, and citizens will have the ability to quickly identify persons on the spectrum through these notations, which may significantly decrease the potential of fatalities.

As a mother of a 9-year-old son who is on the spectrum, safety is a critical concern. I know how important it is for him and other individuals with autism to be included, to live independently, and to be protected from harm. This bill is a simple solution that not only helps to communicate a medical and/or special need, but also creates awareness.

I ask that you pass this important legislation. Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

Paulette Lewis  
Parent of a child on the spectrum  
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