

Date: February 25, 2026

To: Chair Jheanelle Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Eric Carpenter-Grantham, Co-Founder, The Blue Runway for Autism and Namesake of ERIC's ID LAW

Re: Support for House Bill #HB901 – Education – Public School Student – Recognition of External Diagnosis of Autism

1. Introduction

Dear Ways and Means Members of the Committee,

My name is Eric Carpenter-Grantham, and I am a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. I am writing to strongly support House Bill #HB901, which would require schools to recognize a student's external diagnosis of autism from qualified professionals until the school completes its own evaluation, and to begin that evaluation within 30 days of receiving both the diagnosis and parental consent. This Bill would help the child and the parent to get the support and services early that the family would need. As an autistic person, this bill is deeply personal to me.

2. Personal Story

My mother knew something was different about me when I was an infant. I cried often. I was extremely sensitive to bright lights, loud sounds, and touch. It was overwhelming for me, even before I had the words to explain it. For my family, it was very difficult to live in a space where they knew something was going on, but were told to "wait" until I reached a certain age before I could be evaluated. That waiting period only prolonged stress for both me and my parents.

Thankfully, my doctor at Children's National Hospital recognized the signs early. He helped my mother understand my sensory sensitivities and explained how to better support me — even something as simple as recreating a calm birth-like environment: swaddling me, limiting bright lights, and reducing loud noise. That early guidance made a difference. But not every family is heard or supported that way.

Too often, parents are dismissed. Too often, children are left without services while systems delay action. Those delays matter. Early diagnosis and early intervention can change the trajectory of a child's development. It gives families tools. It reduces stress. It provides understanding instead of judgment.

3. Key Points

This Bill will help so many parents to feel supported and the child will get the help they need asap instead of waiting and the situation becomes stressful and frustrating. Being educated on how to support your child and family is very important. Early diagnosis will bring quick results on next steps to help the child and family.

4. Conclusion

House Bill #HB901 would ensure that children receive support as soon as possible instead of being stuck in a waiting period that can be frustrating and harmful. Recognizing external diagnoses and requiring timely evaluations shows respect for families and for medical professionals who have already done the work.

Early support leads to better outcomes. It empowers families with education and resources. It gives children like me the chance to thrive instead of struggle in silence.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill #HB901.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

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