

Date: February 25, 2026

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

From: Linda Carpenter-Grantham, President, The Blue Runway for Autism (ERIC's ID LAW)

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

1. Introduction

My name is Linda Carpenter-Grantham and I am a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. I am writing to strongly support House Bill #HB901, Requiring a school to recognize a student's external diagnosis of autism from certain professionals until the school completes an initial evaluation; requiring a school to initiate an evaluation of a student within 30 days of receiving an external diagnosis of autism and written consent from the student's parent. Being a parent of a son with autism. This Bill would help the child and the parent to get the support and services early that the family would need.

2. Personal Story

This bill is important to me because I knew when my son Eric was an infant that something was different. He cried a lot. He was sensitive to bright lights, loud sounds and touch. It was a very difficult space to live in when others are telling you to wait until your child is of a certain age before the child can be evaluated. It prolongs the stress on the child and the parent. I am very appreciative for Eric's doctor from Children's National Hospital. Dr. Nathaniel Beers. He educated me when Eric was less than a year old. He told me that I would have to re-create Eric's birth. Swaddle him in the blanket, No Bright light, No Loud Noise. He knew already that Eric was going to have delays. When others are judging you who knew nothing about autism/delays.

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

For these reasons, I urge the committee to support House Bill #HB901. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Linda Carpenter-Grantham

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