

LaVerne Engelhardt

From: Garrett Love [garrett.t.love@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 11, 2012 2:28 PM
Subject: Fwd: Can you help me, please?
Attachments: Autism Pilot Report 2 23 12.pdf; HB 2764 PP Presentation.pdf; Missouri report.pdf

A good friend had asked me to pass this email & information on to you in regards to the autism bill (HB2764). She won't be able to be at the hearing, but wanted to get this message to you. Let her know if you have any questions (annehodgdon@gmail.com). Hope you all had great weekends.
Garrett

----- Forwarded message -----

From: ANNE HODGDON <annehodgdon@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 5:50 AM
Subject: Can you help me, please?
To: garrett.t.love@gmail.com

Dear Member of the House Insurance Committee,

I am writing to you about the autism bill (H.B. 2764) currently sitting in your insurance committee and scheduled for a hearing on Monday. I have worked hard on the autism issue over the past few years, and so you can imagine my discomfort at being out of the country and unable to attend the hearing on this bill scheduled for Monday. I hope you will accept this email in lieu of my testimony.

If I could be there, I would testify about how my precious grandson has just turned 9 and is thriving in 2nd grade, fully mainstreamed with no special education classes; and doing very well academically, behaviorally, and socially. He has friends, plays sports, gets invited to parties, and he has a quick mind, dry sense of humor and an infectious belly laugh! But I would also tell the committee that at age 3 he had no speech, he had never waved bye-bye, he did not answer to his name, rarely made eye contact, was given to screaming rages for no reason, twirled in place, and flapped his hands. And if at age 3 you put him in a room with other children, he didn't gravitate to them to play; it was as though he was alone and no other child was there. He was kicked out of two separate preschools for biting other children, and he was incapable of hugging or accepting a hug from his loved ones. Today he is my 'rock star' who inspires me because of all he has been able to achieve. But all this achievement only came about because my husband JB and I made a decision when the diagnosis was first made, that we would provide our precious grandchild the best therapy available, regardless of cost. Most children born with autism don't have parents or grandparents who can shoulder that burden. Our grandson is lucky because by a sheer stroke of luck, he was born into a family with wealthy grandparents. Much like a roll of the dice, one person wins, the others lose. And for our lucky little guy, whose therapy is now concluded, he will continue to

grow, learn and develop with the skills he has learned through therapy; and as an independent adult, he will be able to take care of himself, make his own contributions to society, know joy and fulfillment, and hopefully someday marry and have his own family. Without therapy, I have no doubt that as an adult, he would have been unable to care for himself and would have been a burden on society to care for him, to the tune of approximately \$3M per person, according to research on the subject.

So I'm joyous for our own successful family outcome; but I swear on all that's holy to me that I lose sleep some nights thinking about all the other precious little children born with autism whom I can't help. **BUT YOU CAN HELP these children** by voting YES on H.B. 2764 in the insurance committee to allow it to get to the House floor for a vote. And then by voting YES again in favor of H.B. 2764.

I beg of you to not see this as a partisan issue. **Protecting our children is as non-partisan as an issue can get.** And please don't fall back on the tired old "mandate" argument. H.B. 2764 does nothing more than send a message to insurance companies doing business in Kansas that says our legislature joins others states, including our neighbor Missouri, in no longer permitting insurance companies to deliberately discriminate against children born with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum of disorders. It tells the insurance companies that our State's leaders want all Kansas children to have a chance at a life where they can be a functional part of society, instead of a later drain on it as adults who cannot care for themselves. **It is a clear message that says no longer can this class of Kansas children be left to twist in the wind without help; while other children born with heart defects or muscular defects, or a plethora of other abnormalities and diseases, get full insurance coverage for treatment under their parents' policies.**

And here's the good news: with insurance coverage for therapy spread across the board, the cost is pennies! The test track approved by the legislature in 2010 for children whose parents are KS government employees has proven that the cost is **a mere 14 cents** per member, per month; so the fears and threats of high costs made by the insurance companies two years ago proved to be without foundation. I have attached some reading material for you - the most key is the Power Point presentation highlighting the current situation in Kansas; and the Missouri report which details the enormous success at extraordinarily low cost since MO enacted full autism legislation a year ago.

Please, please open your heart for these innocent children, and support H.R. 2764....!

Respectfully,

Anne