

Mr. Chairman and House Members of the Business Affairs & Labor Committee:

My name is Lu Etta Loeber. I am the Director of the Yampa Valley Autism Program and my 13 year old grandson Henry Connor is profoundly autistic.

I wish to make two points: Autism is the fastest growing disability in the US. ASD surpasses even childhood diabetes. Diabetes is also a life-long disorder, but is treatable. Insurance companies cover diabetes; WHY DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AUTISM?

Secondly, there has been much discussion and debate about the cost to the subscriber and to businesses that subsidize insurance coverage. Here are the facts: The Colorado Division of Insurance Actuaries found that an increase would not exceed \$ 4.12 per month/person. The reduced caps reduce the monthly costs to \$ 3.83. That is less than a latte' at Starbucks or Kids Meal at McDonalds.

Sometimes there is a cost to doing what is right. Autism like diabetes can be treated. Early intervention and ongoing treatment reduces the life-time care of our individuals by two-thirds saving money to the state education system and Medicaid over their lifetime.

We can't afford to wait. The lack of of insurance coverage for even basic services has bankrupted our families both emotionally and financially. If you do not know someone or a family with autism; YOU WILL.

I urge you to vote yes. The 60 families we serve and my grandson Henry needs your help.

Gratefully,

Lu Etta Loeber  
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