

**Re: In Support of *Full* HB8183 Funding**

May 4, 2026

Greetings honorable legislators. My name is Andre Bessette, Ph.D., and I am Vice President of Children's Services at The J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center here in Warwick. I am writing in passionate and unwavering advocacy for full funding for HB 8183, to help support our IDD clients and the committed and tireless staff who work with them.

I started in the field over 35 years ago, as a Behavior Specialist on Long Island NY. There, we had the daunting task of caring for the population of IDD clients who were continuing to be discharged from large and controversial institutions in the NYC metropolitan area. Despite the groundswell of awareness and support in the wake of the deinstitutionalization movement, our in-need peers continued to lack crucial funding and resources. And the funding they did receive was hard fought-for by family members and fierce advocates.

Unfortunately, over three decades and many hard-earned lessons later, we face the same challenges. Please let us learn from history sooner than later, and see to it that HB 8183 receives full funding. Our clients and their dedicated staff deserve it.

Sincerely,

Andre P. Bessette, Ph.D.  
VP of Children's Services  
J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center  
3445 Post Rd  
Warwick RI 02886  
(860)933-6697