

Steven Sepe

From: Naiommy baret <nbaret@empoweringthrougheducationconsulting.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:23 AM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: Fwd: Testimony in Support of Bill H-5497

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: naiommyb@gmail.com
Date: March 18, 2025 at 2:08:25 PM EDT
To: HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislator.gov
Cc: Naiommy baret <nbaret@empoweringthrougheducationconsulting.org>
Subject: Testimony in Support of Bill H-5497

Testimony in Support of Bill H-5497

Dear Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Representative Kathy Fogarty's bill, H-5497, which would require the state to develop a budget and seek funding to pilot an Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Hub.

As a parent of a child with complex healthcare needs, I have witnessed the critical importance of mental health support during the early years of development. Young children, especially those who are facing significant mental health challenges that can interfere with their growth, relationships, and ability to learn. Since 2017, the percentage of children under age six with Medicaid insurance experiencing serious mental health challenges has alarmingly risen from 10% to 22%. These are not just numbers; they represent real children struggling to navigate a world that can often feel overwhelming.

During my journey with my child, I was fortunate to receive the support of an early mental health counselor through early intervention services. This counselor played a pivotal role in helping my child navigate social, emotional, and behavioral challenges, particularly during the onset of seizures. As a first-time mom grappling with postpartum depression, the support I received was not just beneficial; it was a lifeline. It allowed me to manage my own mental health while ensuring my child's well-being during one of the most vulnerable stages of my life.

Bill H-5497 is crucial in advocating for targeted training and support for mental health professionals who work with our youngest children. By investing in mental health support at such a critical stage of development, we are not only supporting individual families but also strengthening our communities. Children who receive appropriate mental health care are more likely to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

I urge you to support bill H-5497 and help pave the way for a brighter future for our children. Let us create a system where every child has access to the mental health support they need to grow and flourish.

Thank you for considering this important issue.

Sincerely,
Naiommy Baret