



PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE

August 16, 2022

Good morning Chair Denis, Vice-Chair Carlton and committee members,

I, Brian Hager, am writing to implore this committee to approve the Grant a Gift Autism Foundation-Ackerman Center's (GGAF Ackerman Center) ARPA request for \$8.5 million. As the foundation's president and employee of the Ackerman Center since 2019, I have fielded countless phone calls from families needing services; a vast majority of these families have nowhere else to turn because of their insurance or inability to afford care.

With the incidence rate of autism now at 1 in 44, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder at 5% prevalence, and various other neurodevelopmental disorders and mental health issues at an all time high, these funds would ensure services for the families that desperately need the support to access high quality, affordable care in Southern Nevada.

At GGAF Ackerman Center, we help families throughout their various stages of life, from early diagnosis to vocational planning and resources along the way. We have recently expanded our vocational services and partnered with MGM Resorts where we just placed several clients in employed positions at MGM properties. This funding is more than just quality access to care, it is an investment into our community and the workforce of Nevada. The earlier we can diagnose a patient, the better trajectory they have in reaching their fullest potential, which ultimately lessens the state support they will need later in life.

Let's be the change that we want to see in our state and approve this funding opportunity today!

Thank you for your time and service.

Brian Hager, CMPE

President

Grant a Gift Autism Foundation – Ackerman Center