

Testimony in Support of AB422

Assembly Committee

April 05, 2023.

My name is Liliana Alvarez. I am a mom and a member of the Parent Leadership Team (PLT).

I am writing in support of AB422, which requires infants and toddlers who are determined to be at risk for autism spectrum disorder to be presumed eligible for early intervention services and requires the Aging and Disability Services Division to refer such a child to the Autism Treatment Assistance Program.

Every child deserves to receive a diagnosis and treatment as soon as possible no matter their race, age, economic status, etc. Since there is no specific cause of this disorder the parents also should receive a guide to know how to help their children. I believe the long waits for a diagnosis and treatment cause many mental health problems. If the bill is approved it will help not only the mental health of our children but also of our parents in the community.

For these reasons and more, we urge you to support AB422.

Thank you for your time and for investing in Nevada's children and families.

Sincerely,
Liliana Alvarez

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April 4, 2023

Greetings Chair Peters and Committee Members.

My name is Mary Jane Eichholz. I am the mother of a 17 year old daughter with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I am calling in SUPPORT of AB422, which requires infants and toddlers who are determined to be at risk for autism spectrum disorder to be presumed eligible for early intervention services and requires the Aging and Disability Services Division to refer such a child to the Autism Treatment Assistance Program.

Although my daughter was diagnosed with ASD at age 8, we found ATAP on our own when she was 15 years old. We have been denied services through our insurance and other agencies prior to this and could not have access to what we do now if not for our involvement in ATAP. Early intervention is absolutely vital to increasing positive outcomes for children with ASD, and ATAP helps families receive that intervention. Nevada should be a leader, not a follower, when it comes to helping families meet the need of their ASD children.

I urge you to help families cross over the many hurdles they encounter along this ASD journey by supporting AB422.

Thank you for reading my letter and for investing in Nevada's children and families.

Sincerely,
Mary Jane Eichholz

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Testimony and Support for AB422

Good afternoon,

Madam chair and members of the committee, my name is Yesenia Gonzales, I'm the assistant to Azulblue United by Autism, a non-profit organization serving families in Las Vegas, Nevada since 2010. As of 2023 per the CDC, 1 in 36 children have been identified with Autism. 1 in 54 was the rate when my son finally was diagnosed and as you can see the rates are rising. Autism is 4 times more common in boys than girls. Autism doesn't discriminate as it affects all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups throughout the U.S.

I'm a mother that is autistic and the mother of an amazing 13 year old autistic boy. As a mother who fought and begged for answers 10 years ago, I support AB422. At the age of 3, early intervention services, like Child Find are what helped to identify that my son had special needs. Unfortunately another 3 years later is when my child finally was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. My son was at high risk due to being nonverbal and having developmental delays at the age of 3. His schools didn't know how to deal with my son's needs as he was honestly a walking question mark and it was a battle to get the proper services for him and yet they still are. Had my son been identified sooner, my son wouldn't have struggled as he did. Unfortunately, many families in our communities face these disparities and have been on extensive long waiting lists for services to identify their child's neurodevelopmental needs.

Early Intervention is key, but sadly we do not see that, our children are severely impacted by the lack of resources and support. Families are left with no answers and heartbroken due to being unable to help their child. We keep falling behind instead of moving forward and our children are paying the price. Azulblue United by Autism sees the need within our families in our communities and I hope you all do too. Azulblue United by Autism supports AB422. We implore you to please hear us, help our community to finally have answers, children are affected academically due to the lack of a diagnosis, please don't let our families continue through this anguish. Our Children in Nevada Deserve Better, Please vote in support for AB422

Respectfully,

Yesenia Gonzales

Assistant to Azulblue United by Autism



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Advocacy**
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April 3, 2023

Support for AB 422 - Early Intervention Services ASD Presumptive Eligibility

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shelly Speck. I am a resident of Gardnerville, NV, and a Parent Leader for the Children's Advocacy Alliance. I am providing testimony today on behalf of the Nevada Strong Start Coalition.

I ask on behalf of all infants and toddlers in Nevada, that during this historic Legislative Session you as our leaders make bold steps to invest in Early Intervention services in *support of AB 422*. These programs ensure that every child enters school ready to learn and are provided with the supports and services needed to grow and thrive. Speech therapy for a toddler with language delays or physical/occupational therapy for motor challenges can improve the developmental trajectories of infants and toddlers and prevent further delays. Timely services may also reduce the need for special education or more intensive supports when children are older.

Early Intervention services are critical, particularly in the first three years of life, and it is an investment that we cannot delay making. As a member of the Children's Advocacy Alliance, I know all babies are worth it.

Thank you for supporting Nevada's children.

Shelly Speck
Gardnerville, NV