



*Written Testimony before the Judiciary Committee
Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves
Department of Social Services
March 31st*

Good morning, Chairs Winfield and Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I am pleased to offer remarks on House Bill 7259.

HOUSE BILL 7259 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO VARIOUS STATUTES CONCERNING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Section 10 of this bill would require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to assist the Court Support Services Division in conducting an assessment and identifying appropriate treatment and services for individuals with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder for the purposes of being eligible for a supervised diversionary program.

While we support specialized diversionary services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, DSS cannot support this legislation as the requirements are outside the agency's scope of work. The DSS Community Options unit supports individuals with autism spectrum disorder that are on a home and community-based services waiver and our behavioral health administrative services organization, Carelon, supports state plan services for individuals under 21. However, DSS does not diagnose or build treatment plans. As such, DSS would need an outside consultant to assist with this work, which would require an unbudgeted appropriation.

Further, the Department's fee-for-service rate for autism evaluation (3-5 hours) is \$636.48. Without knowing how many individuals would need this assessment, DSS is unable to provide a more detailed financial estimate of the cost of this bill. However, there would undoubtedly be costs from this bill that are not included in the Governor's recommended budget.