

March 7, 2025

To: Senator Renee Erickson, Chair of the Committee on Government Efficiency and Members

From: Kay Soltz, guardian of an adult son with autism who receives HCBS I/DD services.

Dear Senator Erickson,

I am your constituent. Shortly after you were elected Representative, I took you on a tour of my son's day program, Arrowhead West. We appreciated your time and attention that day as well as your warmth interacting with clients. Since then I have contacted you a few times. Last time was at a candidate forum in September 2024 at Envision. I told you about a problem I had with residential services for my son that the CDDO and KDADS did not help with.

I have not found bureaucracies responsive and think they require oversight from elected officials. In the situations I had problems with, persons who were responsible for providing residential services to my son were reported for Abuse and Neglect by his case manager. The investigator went to my son's day program to interview him. My son's speech is hard to understand and he doesn't speak to strangers, so he said nothing to the investigator. The investigator did not contact the case manager who made the report or me, his guardian.

Folks with disabilities and their families need the legislature to be involved in developing solutions to perceived problems in the I/DD system. Changes may be needed but the consequences of any change must be carefully considered from the point of view of those who will be impacted and should be an improvement, not just something different. A change KDADS first planned to implement in January and which has now been delayed greatly concerns me. That is how the level of care an individual needs will be determined and how funding will be connected to that determination. My son lives with me so I and his day program are required to record behavioral data for a year to determine the level of care he needs which determines the reimbursement rate to agencies providing services. As I understand it, KDADS plans to determine the level of care needed over a 3 days period. Which three days? Three consecutive days? Three random days? My son could have three good days and appear not to need much support, but there are other days when he screams and cries, jumps up and down and hits himself, and may damage his surroundings.

There is a client at my son's day program who constantly walks around hitting everyone. One staff is assigned to him in order to protect the others in the building, although the day program agency does not get funding for a one on one staff person. Individualized needs must be taken into consideration when determining funding levels. One size fits all won't fit anybody.

I am writing to ask you and members of your committee to support SB161. and HB 2240. Legislative oversight is needed to develop appropriate solutions. I am pleased that work groups to develop solutions will include those impacted by these changes. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

