

On behalf of the Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder, we are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 140, which seeks to expand the existing program established by the juvenile court for the treatment of children diagnosed with or suspected to have autism spectrum disorders. This bill is a vital step toward ensuring that children with neurobehavioral disorders associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol or controlled substances receive the support and treatment they need.

Senate Bill 140 recognizes the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced by children with neurobehavioral disorders. By expanding the eligibility criteria to include these children, the bill not only acknowledges the diverse needs of our youth but also reinforces our commitment to providing comprehensive support for their families. These children often face significant hurdles in their development and daily functioning, and this program will help ensure they receive appropriate interventions and resources tailored to their specific needs.

It is important to acknowledge that many of these children find themselves in juvenile court due to unfortunate circumstances often beyond their control. Factors such as unstable home environments, exposure to substance abuse, and lack of access to early intervention services can lead to behaviors that result in contact with the juvenile justice system. By providing a dedicated program for children with neurobehavioral disorders, we can address the root causes of their behaviors and help redirect their paths toward positive outcomes, rather than allowing them to be labeled solely by their circumstances.

The DAAY Court program in Clark County has demonstrated remarkable success in supporting children with autism spectrum disorders. Under the leadership of Judge Sunny Bailey, the program has effectively provided tailored interventions that address the unique needs of these children. The DAAY Court's approach emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment, focusing on family engagement and community resources to foster positive development. By expanding this program to include children with neurobehavioral disorders, we can replicate these successful outcomes and ensure that all children facing similar challenges receive the support they deserve.

In conclusion, we urge you to support Senate Bill 140. By expanding the scope of the juvenile court's program, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of children with neurobehavioral disorders and their families when they encounter the juvenile justice system. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.