

Dear Honorable Legislators,

We are writing to oppose line 365 of SB78. A bill which eliminates the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD).

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is relatively new to the disability scene. Autism diagnostic evaluations and treatment were not funded by health insurance in Nevada until 2011, and even then our laws only required that government agencies and businesses based in Nevada offer this insurance benefit to their employees. Medicaid began funding autism treatment in 2015, for children only. It wasn't until 2024 that Medicaid adjusted their policies and began funding autism treatment across the lifespan.

The CASD gives a voice to people impacted by autism. The Commission is current and relevant, as its members are directly involved in working with, living with or treating people with autism, everyday. Through its commissioners the CASD is connected to Nevada's nonprofits that provide supports for people impacted by autism and Nevada's professional organizations that provide services to people with autism.

By reviewing autism related data from Nevada Early Intervention Services, Autism Treatment Assistance Program and Nevada Department of Education, the CASD has guided these agencies and legislators to better meet the needs of Nevadans with autism.

Providing treatment to people with autism required developing an entirely new workforce of Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Registered Behavior Technicians. Similarly, educating students with autism in elementary, secondary and post secondary schools requires specially trained teachers and autism specific supports that traditionally have not been available. Supporting individuals with autism across the lifespan requires a new set of skills in home health care aides and supported living assistance. Supporting people with autism as they seek and maintain employment requires specific job coach skills and vocational rehabilitation strategies that are just beginning to be developed. Furthermore, no one quite knows how people with autism will age or what supports they will need as aged adults. The CASD is actively involved in identifying, addressing and making recommendations on the needs of individuals with ASD throughout Nevada, across their lifespan.

There is no other board, commission or council that duplicates this mission.

Please maintain the CASD to continue providing a voice to people directly impacted by ASD.