Senator Robyn Kennedy, Chair

Representative Jay Livingstone, Chair

Senator Liz Miranda, Vice Chair

Representative Judith Garcia, Vice Chair

Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

Massachusetts State House

Boston, MA 02133

**Re: H.242/S.149 An act to enhance standards of care for those with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities**

To the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities,

My name is Tamara Huntley, and I live in Ludlow, MA. I am a Self-Advocacy Liaison for the

Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) where our mission is to provide opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and families to enhance independence, productivity and inclusion.

Today I am here to testify on behalf of myself and the Council regarding bills H.242/S.149: an Act To enhance standards of care for those with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities. This legislation is a priority to the MDDC, and it is also an important priority to my family because I am a parent of a now adult daughter who experiences I/DD. This legislation would allow individuals like her to exercise independence and feel confident that they are receiving attentive care. It would provide her healthcare providers with the education and support to fully understand health care considerations specific to my daughters disability and to be able to make informed decisions on how to best support her healthy life.

In my career, I train people with I/DD to advocate for themselves and empower them to make choices. I believe in supporting healthy choices while supporting the independence of people with disabilities. I am a parent who wants to empower my daughter to be fully involved in making her own medical decisions with people in which she trusts and feels comfortable. This includes a doctor that understands her specific needs, and this legislation is important in that it trains doctors to be able to best do so.

 This law would enable my daughter and others with disabilities to have health care providers that fully understand them. A disability does not determine the quality of life and that is important for all people to feel comfortable with their doctors and receive good adequate care so they can be as healthy and productive as possible.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Tamara Huntley