September XXX, 2025

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.261/S.155 An Act relative to authorizing supported decision-making agreements for certain adults with disabilities**

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Livingstone, Senator Miranda, Representative Garcia & Members of 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.261/S.155: an Act relative to authorizing supported decision-making agreements for certain adults with 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 their decision-making rights and be at the forefront of their own destiny.

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. My daughter Emily experiences I/DD and a communication disorder which limits some of her abilities to make certain choices without support. I am a parent who wants to empower my daughter to be fully involved in making her own decisions with people in which she trusts and feels comfortable. SDM is an ideal option for Emily whereas guardianship would limit her rights. SDM allows her to be seen as a person capable of making her own decisions with

guidance from her trusted supporters. This law would enable my daughter and others with disabilities to have choice and control over their own lives with the help of designated supporters that they choose themselves.

This legislation would help people like Emily and would change her life for the better by not limiting individuals with disabilities to only utilize more restrictive practices, like guardianship, and ensure she and others will have the dignity to be at the center of the decision-making process.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Tamara Huntley

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