

House State and Local Committee

House Bill 601 – Matthew’s Law

Sponsor Testimony

9 June 2020

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB 601, better known as Matthew’s Law, which would require new public buildings to have at least one restroom facility with an adult changing station for those with special needs or disabilities.

The intention of this legislation is not to create a burden on businesses, but rather to help families with special needs to be able to access the same services that any other family can. The idea behind this bill was brought to me by a constituent whose son’s name is the inspiration of the bill, as she has told me of all the hardships she faces because of the lack of adult changing tables. Currently, many adults with special needs are not able to use handicapped bathrooms because they are unable to fit securely on baby changing stations and must be changed on bathroom floors. This legislation would also allow for a tax credit for any taxpayer who is required to install an adult changing table in their business. The credit cannot exceed \$250 and must be claimed in the taxable year in which the table was installed. Typically, the cost of a table can range from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand, depending on the type of table.

During the creation of this bill, it was important for us to try and make this bill as flexible as possible for business owners. For that reason, exemptions can be granted if the building department or superintendent determine that installing an adult changing table would not be feasible, it would not allow for federal accessibility standards, it would destroy the historic significance of a building, or the building is not frequented by the public. This bill also would only

require new building or those undergoing major renovations totaling \$50,000 or more to add an adult changing station to their restroom facilities.

This legislation would ensure that adults with disabilities are given the dignity and inclusion they deserve, while also providing a safe, clean place for them and their caregivers. This will allow for those adults, their families, and their caregivers to patronize local businesses, instead of having to sacrifice going out in public for fear that there will not be a changing place.

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me time to testify on behalf of this bill and I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.