



House Bill 96
Written Proponent Testimony of Kristyn Butler, Ph.D.
Ability Matters

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Kristyn Butler, CEO of Ability Matters. On behalf of Ability Matters, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today in support of House Bill 96.

Ability Matters is a provider of individualized services for individuals with autism and other neurological disabilities throughout Central Ohio. We are committed to providing premier services to individuals with autism and other neurological disabilities in a way that improves their quality of life and allows them to reach their full potential.

We are incredibly grateful for the provisions in House Bill 96 that expand the age eligibility for both the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship and the Autism Scholarship programs. These scholarships have long served as a critical resource for families across Ohio—offering access to specialized education and therapeutic services tailored to their child’s unique needs. By extending eligibility beyond the current age limits, this legislation ensures that students with disabilities are not cut off from needed support, particularly when many continue to need these services into young adulthood.

We are also deeply appreciative of the increased funding made available for the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship as well as the increase to the maximum award amount of the Autism Scholarship.

These changes reflect a deeper understanding of what it means to truly support individuals with developmental disabilities across their lifespan. Education and support do not end at a fixed age—especially for individuals whose paths may not follow a traditional timeline. With this expansion, more families will be empowered to make the best decisions for their children’s education and development.

The team at Ability Matters—and the families we serve—urge the members of the Ohio Senate to continue to recognize the importance of these policies that support all Ohioans. Ability Matters is committed to shaping the future, changing lives and impacting the world for individuals with

disabilities in the community. We stand ready to assist in our shared work to build a more inclusive and supportive Ohio for all, especially those with autism and other neurological disabilities. Ohio wins when all have the ability to matter.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. I would be happy to discuss Ability Matters in more detail at your convenience. I can be reached via email at kristyn@abilitymattersohio.org.