

May 5, 2017

Senator Dave Burke  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Subject: Creation of a State Rehabilitation Council in Ohio

Dear Senator Burke:

I am writing on behalf of the Autism Society of Ohio in support of the creation of a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in Ohio.

The creation of a State Rehabilitation Council would make Ohio compliant with federal law with respect to the independent commission advising Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). An SRC would streamline the roles of the current entities (OOD Commissioners, statewide Consumer Advisory Committee and the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities) that represent individuals with disabilities in Ohio, while expanding the opportunities for broader representation from multiple disability disciplines. It would also increase the effectiveness of the disability community in relaying their concerns and interests to OOD. Finally, moving to an SRC model would create considerable financial savings by reducing reimbursement and travel costs.

In short, this change would allow for greater access, greater awareness, less confusion and follow a model that has been adopted across the country while saving taxpayer dollars.

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities holds a Youth with Disabilities Leadership Forum which we would like to see preserved as part of the new SRC.

The Autism Society of Ohio, which includes the Autism Society affiliates throughout Ohio, are strongly in support of this effort to make access easier for busy and sometimes overburdened families. With a simplified commission, individuals with autism and their families will be able to more simply and easily provide input, feedback and get concerns addressed.

We urge you to support any efforts around creating a State Rehabilitation Council. If you have any questions, or if we can assist in this effort, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Yavorcik, Autism Society of Ohio Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, at 419-787-8124 or [barb@autismohio.org](mailto:barb@autismohio.org).

Thank you for your interest and anything you can do to further the creation of a State Rehabilitation Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathi Machle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathi Machle  
President of the Board  
Autism Society of Ohio

*The Autism Society of Ohio (ASO) is a statewide affiliate of the Autism Society of America. It is a coalition of the local Ohio affiliates (Greater Akron, Central Ohio, Greater Cincinnati, Greater Cleveland, Mahoning Valley, and Northwest Ohio). ASO's mission is to "improve the lives of all affected by autism," and focuses its efforts on advocating for individuals with autism, their families and those who work with them. ASO also serves as a resource for information and support in areas where our local affiliates do not cover, mainly rural communities. ASO's mission is to "improve the lives of all affected by autism", with a focus on advocacy and autism awareness across the state. ASO also serves as a resource for information, programming and support in areas not served by a local affiliate.*