

My name is Elizabeth Marsh. I am writing in support for SF0999 in the omnibus SF2782 bill . SF2782 directly impacts our family. Our oldest daughter Allie has had 10 brain surgeries in her short life and has an ileostomy due to lifelong bowel issues. We try to live our lives with love, happiness and creating memories as a family. However, we are constantly faced with barriers and obstacles like not having access to changing spaces preventing Allison to be able to live her best life.

An ileostomy is a medical procedure to divert stool from a stoma out of the body into a pouch attached to the abdomen. There are anywhere from 725,000 to one million people living in the United States with an ostomy.

We try to get out and about as a family as much as possible. We enjoy trips to lakes, parks, zoos, pools, the Minnesota Capitol and museums to name a few places. While in public if Allie's pouch needs to be emptied and there is a family restroom my husband or myself can bring her. Unfortunately, there usually is not one available which means I need to bring her to the women's bathroom. We try to avoid men's bathrooms with urinals due to Allie's age.

Every so often Allie's ostomy pouch needs to be completely changed. Leaks happen and they do not happen on a schedule. When Allie's pouch needs to be changed it takes about 5-7 minutes. Everything needs to be removed, the skin needs to be cleaned and prepped before placing a new pouch. Allie also has a ventriculoperitoneal shunt which is a device inside her head that drains fluid from her brain into her peritoneal cavity. The device protrudes a bit on her skull. I would never ask her to put her head directly on a hard floor because it would be uncomfortable with her shunt. It would also be unsanitary and disgusting. We could bring a mat inside a larger stall and have Allison lay on the mat however most stall doors do not go directly to the floor ensuring her privacy.

Due to Allison's limited use of her left hand from her cerebral palsy she needs a caregiver to change her bag. As you can imagine trying to change a bag over an area that leaks stool is nearly impossible to do while she is standing.

I ask that you support our needs and individuals with disabilities by voting to move this bill, SF2782 including SF0999 forward. Moving this bill will ensure individuals like Allie can start to be a part of the community as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990 and Olmstead Decision (1999) have stated they should be.

Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth Marsh

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