



AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

We are writing in strong support of SF 2995 I am the Executive Director at African Community Services (ACS) and we are recipients of the Community Solutions Grant Program. Our program is the Somali Autism Stigma Reduction Project and is aimed at combatting the stigma in the Somali community that is directed towards children with autism spectrum disorder and their families.

ACS' work in this area has started to raise the visibility of this matter with leaders and key organizations in the Somali Community including the Islamic Association of North America, IANA. This interest is new as the attitude toward these children and their families is something that is not generally acknowledged. This could not have been accomplished without a grant from the Community Solutions Fund.

ACS applauds the Governor and Lt. Governor for including the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program in their Department of Health budget bill SF 2995 and urges the committee to support this program by including SF402 in the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus budget bill.

ACS supports the Community Solutions Fund because it allows organizations to get the necessary financial support to develop and undertake innovative, community-driven strategies to address difficult community concerns.

Sincerely,

Hassan Omar
Executive Director
African Community Services