

Dear Chair John Hoffman and Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Deqa Farah, and I am a mother of an autistic child who, like many others, faces barriers to accessing essential life skills—one of the most critical being swimming. I am writing in strong support of SF3040, which would allow families to use waivers, grants, and CFSS to pay for swimming lessons for autistic children.

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for autistic children. Many autistic kids are drawn to water but may lack the skills or awareness to navigate it safely. Despite the well-documented need, swim lessons are often financially out of reach for many families, especially those relying on waiver services for support.

As a parent, I know firsthand how difficult it is to find accessible and adaptive swim lessons that meet the unique needs of autistic children. For many of us, these lessons aren't just recreational—they are lifesaving. By allowing waivers and CFSS funding to cover swim instruction, this bill would make a direct and meaningful impact on the safety and well-being of our children.

I urge you to support SF3040 and help ensure that autistic children have access to the resources they need to stay safe in and around water. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deqa Farah, RN, BSN, RDN, LD