



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council

1150 Hancock Street, Third Floor Suite 300
Quincy, MA 02169-4340

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Julie M. Fitzpatrick
CHAIRPERSON

DANIEL M. SHANNON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Testimony of Lisa Ching
To the Joint Committee on Judiciary
June 8, 2011
RE: HB523

Dear Chairpersons and Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you on House Bill 523: An Act to require national background checks. My name is Lisa Ching and I am a member of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council. The Council works to improve the system of supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by bringing together lawmakers with advocates to make sure people with developmental disabilities are included in decisions about public policy. The Council works with legislators and policymakers to serve as an impartial educational resource to inform public policy at both state and federal levels to better meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council reviewed hundreds of bills this session that positively impact the lives of people with Developmental Disabilities when developing our Legislative Priorities for the 2011/2012 Legislative Session. We voted on the National Background Check bill as our top priority.

On a personal note, my son has a lifelong developmental disability and it is extremely important to me and my family that whoever serves my child, as a respite worker or as a caretaker, be fully screened by having their background checked by a national registry database, so that if that person has committed a crime or a felony, I would be made aware of that person's history. In some communities near Massachusetts' borders, it is common for human service providers to employ residents from adjacent states (i.e. RI, NH, CT, NY). The existing Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks do not capture data for out-of-state residents who work in Massachusetts.

In order to have competent and trustworthy individuals working in the best interest of my son, I need to know that these potential workers have not committed crimes in the past, and will not have the opportunity to create crimes in the future, especially as it relates to my son. It is important to have this national background check bill passed for the mere fact that without it, people in the Commonwealth will not know if a potential worker/individual who has worked or lived out of state, has committed crimes. It should be something that all potential employees should disclose to employers, but the fact remains that this does not happen. People are able to move state to state and not have their past catch up to them until it is too late.



(617) 770-7676 (Voice)
(617) 770-9499 (TTY)
(617) 770-1987 (Facsimile)

Thus, to avoid repeat offenses or to have a safeguard in place, so that people with disabilities are secure and safe, it is of utmost importance that this national background check bill be passed. Please support and pass the national background check bill. Not only will it help to maintain the quality of life for people with disabilities, but it will also put families' and caregivers' minds at ease, knowing their loved one is not a vulnerable target of potential abuse by a past offender of the law.

In summary, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council supports House Bill 523. We applaud Representative Marty Walsh for introducing such an important piece of legislation. It will ensure that vendor agencies have means to access a person's comprehensive criminal history. This legislation will remedy this danger.