



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 Lora Brugnaro
To the Joint Committee on Public Health
May 10, 2011
RE: HB1528

Dear Chairpersons and Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you on House Bill 1528: An Act relative to Down Syndrome. My name is Lora Brugnaro and I am the Vice Chair 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.

House Bill 1528 addresses the insufficient information provided to expectant mothers and/or couples when they receive a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Without balanced factual information women and/or couples are at a disadvantage in terms of what that the diagnosis means to them and their family, especially if they don't have access to avenues that will enable them to further research the diagnosis. House Bill 1528 has identified this shortfall of information and has addressed it, ensuring that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, is provided with accurate, up to date information so that they can make informed decisions.

There is a history of discrimination of people with disabilities and some may worry about having children with a disability. It has been my experience that many people have unfounded fear or pity of disability because they have not had prior exposure to the disability or information.

We can all agree that good personal decisions are based on having sufficient knowledge and being able to respond to the best of our ability versus not having sound information and reacting from fear or ignorance.



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

Personally, if I was told of a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome, I would want practical, balanced, evidence-based information that I could trust. Only then could I best process this information.

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council supported the bipartisan efforts of the Kennedy/Brownback Bill that was previously passed into law. House Bill 1528 is the state version this national legislation.

In summary, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council supports House Bill 1528. We applaud Representative Tom Sannicandro for introducing such an important piece of legislation.