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Achieve with us.

Thank you Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Hanni Raley, Executive Director of the Arc of Aurora and write today in support of House Bill 24-1063 on behalf of the people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in our community. We urge you to support this bill and thus support the protection of the rights and well-being of children with disabilities.

As one of 14 local Advocacy Chapters supporting children and families with disabilities, we witness firsthand the challenges and barriers these children face in accessing a quality education that meets their needs. In fact, The Arc of Aurora is specifically addressing issues that 24-1063 seeks to remedy with nearly 30 families and children right now! For example:

- One single father of three children, who has shift work employment, is asked at least 2 out of the 5 days of a school week to pick up his child due to the school's inability to manage his child's behavior. He is at risk of losing his job and the child continues to be denied access to a free and appropriate education.
- One child has been denied access to an upcoming school sponsored field trip during the school day due to lack of appropriate staffing for this child to attend safely. It has been suggested that the child stay home instead, as there won't be staffing available at the school during the field trip day either.
- One grandmother, who is guardian for her grandchild has been told by a local school that she must come sit with her grandchild in a first grade setting and supervise him, or he will need to go home.
- Another mother has been asked to come to the school to assist her child in toileting support, because the school team doesn't have time to go to the bathroom with the child more than three times a day. If the mother cannot be available, she has been asked to keep the child home.

These examples are avoidable... and the behaviors or needs are predictable.

These abbreviated school days currently go undocumented and unreported as absences or suspensions, which are reportable to the school district or CDE. They will not appear on school view district data tools... nor will they be mentioned in performance frameworks. They will not be considered when reviewing the child's placement or level of care. The burden will be

felt by the family and the child will continue to experience negative consequences on their academic, social, and emotional development.

It is imperative that we prioritize the education and well-being of all children, regardless of their abilities. Every child deserves the opportunity to receive a comprehensive education that equips them with the skills and resources necessary for success in school and beyond.

By supporting HB24-1063, you have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children with disabilities and their families. This bill not only ensures that these children receive the support they need to thrive academically and socially- but also promotes inclusivity and equity in our education system.

Thank you for considering our testimony, we urge you to support this bill to improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities in our state.

Hanni Raley, Executive Director

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For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities