



Department of Pediatrics  
Pediatric Endocrinology

To: Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Legislature

From: Dr. Jane L Lynch

January 3, 2019

Dear Governor Abbott;

Please be aware of an amazing initiative to make the lives of our youth and young adults with autism, hearing impairment or other communication challenges. I have been involved with the Aspergers101 initiatives to reduce the risks for misunderstandings in situations involving law officers and young adults who have communication Impediments. I am a Pediatrician who has a son with Asperger's (ASD) who drives here in Texas. I am acutely aware of the risks for miscommunication and poor outcomes for young independent adults with communication issues. I have been involved with a variety of the Aspergers101 projects as an enthusiastic supporter. Our UT Health system faculty joined with the Aspergers101 organization to assess outcomes of the training for law enforcement officers regarding their appreciation and gain of knowledge to better understand autism spectrum in the context of law enforcement situations. (See attached poster publication)

As you may recall, HB 1434 was passed unanimously in the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative session to allow the Driver license or State ID restriction code "Communication Impediment with a peace Officer" as was the much needed update for training for Texas DPS Trooper Recruits (and statewide participating agencies) toward understanding drivers diagnosed with Autism and/or other communication challenges. This work was enthusiastically supported by the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.

The third phase of this work includes an upcoming bill being proposed to the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative session. This collaboration of Aspergers101 and the Texas DPS will alert law enforcement of a person with autism (or other communication impediment) PRIOR to approaching the vehicle. This would be possible by giving the driver the option when registering a vehicle through the Texas DMV. This notification would then be placed in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) that law enforcement utilizes for vehicle/driver information when pulling someone over. This simple coding would revolutionize how officers relate to a driver. Texas would be the first state in the nation to have this innovative tool for our law enforcement- a win/win for both drivers and officers. Please support this bill which will protect our youth and officers.

Respectfully,

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