

House Health, Insurance, and Environment Committee  
 HB18-1223, Declare Autism Epidemic in Colorado  
 April 26, 2018



Hello. My name is Carolyn Reed. I am the mother of a 31-year-old daughter at the "severe" end of the autism spectrum. Our daughter has extremely lucid insights. She is a masterful poet, but she cannot talk. She cannot go into a clothing store without running out in a panic. She will likely not go to college, have a family of her own, or any independence in her life. She will live with us until we are too old to care for her. Then the state will put her in a group home or a host home, where we pray she will be well cared for. But nobody will cure her. Nobody will even research what caused her autism. To do so seems out of fashion these days.

We are called "ablest" by the armchair advocacy world where it has become politically correct to wear one's autism with pride. You can't even say "autism" any more. It has to be neurodiverse. Suddenly no one can discuss the challenges of autism without being eviscerated by the virtue signalers who parrot the same phrases as their neurotypical, paid bureaucrat-mentors.

To ask for truthful autism numbers insults the prideful neurodiverse. They're pretty sure if we call autism an epidemic, their brilliant selves will be eradicated somehow. The "higher functioning autistics" (also a taboo phrase) are ashamed of the "lower functioning" autistics. They decide for everyone how to talk about all autistics, since they *can* talk. They do not speak for us. But this is not about being special or proud. And this is not about semantics. This is about an increasing problem within our society which is being largely ignored: ignored by the schools, nonprofits, local and state governments, social service agencies, science and medicine.



We are told we need to celebrate autism, light up buildings all blue, be martyrs-come-lightly to this splendid world of so-called INDIGO children. I'm sorry, no. Autism acceptance does not have to mean autism denial. Autism causes suffering for many people. Something causes autism. Something is causing its increase. Passage of this bill will bring needed funding for people with autism in Colorado. What in the world could be wrong with that? I urge Colorado to take the lead by admitting autism is increasing at epidemic proportions. It is past time for answers. We deserve them. Thank you for supporting this bill.

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