

Dear Chair Richardson and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing us today. My name is Amy Fields and I have two children we adopted out of foster care with neurodiverse and physical needs.

When COVID hit our community my children were transitioned to a home platform and services for both, but especially my youngest with severe needs were cut. My youngest daughter is blind, has CP, vanishing brain, and a natural love for learning. We had been getting homebound services, which were already bare bones as is but this yanked the rug out from under us. My children require hours of PT, OT, Speech, and Vision services. We got minutes. 10 to 15 minutes of zoom time and some services were zeroed out.

Not only were the services lost so was any real education. Despite her disabilities my daughter loves to learn. She is able to learn at a kindergarten and first grade level but she was only presented with a watered down preschool curriculum. Her love of learning died.

As the parent I was expected to become a special education teacher and do all the work with both of my children. I am adaptable. To reignite my daughter's love of learning and to support my son who is way below grade level I became a teacher. I ignored school work and focused on what my children could do. I spent 80 hours a week making and implementing lessons, supports, and seeing my children through. I paid for outside services, doubled up therapies, and picked up the district's slack.

Now that it is safe to provide in home services our district still will not do so. Services continue to be a struggle and I have to justify through endless and fruitless IEP meetings why we need PT, OT, Speech, and Vision. If I had not worked around the clock my kids would be even further behind.

I am asking the House Education Committee to support House File 965 because it is critically important to families like ours.

Thank you for your time,

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