

AANE is involved in legislation

For the last year, the legislative advocacy committee has been working hard on preparing two bills and one budget amendment to be submitted before the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Congratulations to the members of the committee, Elizabeth Avery, Ron Beland, Fred Conrad, Marilyn Currie, Susan Fagan, Erin Flaherty, Dave Harmon, David Konjoian, Rosalie Konjoian, Nina Lev, and Alice Litter, for filing both bills and recruiting a large number of legislative co-sponsors, state representatives and senators who showed their support for the bill by signing on.

The two bills, described below, have now been assigned to joint (house and senate) committees. The committees will consider the bill and then submit a recommendation to the House as to whether or not the bill has merit and should be passed. We need to convince the members of the committee that these bills are important and need to receive a positive recommendation. You can help!

The Bills and Budget Amendment:

An Act to Establish a Pilot Program for Adults With Asperger's Syndrome – H3838 This would create a pilot program for adults with Asperger's who need employment services. This pilot program would provide the participants with comprehensive services such as career assessment and counseling, job development, job placement, job coaching, employment training, on-the-job support, case management and funding to purchase adjunct supports and services. This two year pilot program would be administered through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission for 25 individuals at a cost of \$500,000 This bill has been submitted to the Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities Committee. The house committee members are Chair Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera of Springfield, Vice-Chair Stephen P. LeDuc of Marlborough, Cory Atkins of Concord, Robert J. Nyman of Hanover, Barbara L'Italien of Andover, Mary E. Grant of Beverly, Thomas Sannicandro of Ashland, John V. Fernandes of Milford, Pam Richardson of Framingham The senate committee members are Senators Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk, McGee of Essex and Middlesex, Baddour of Essex, Jehlen of Middlesex, Resor of Middlesex and Worcester and Tarr of Essex and Middlesex..

An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Hiring Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders – H3908. The second bill is to create a tax credit for employers who hire individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. We hope that this will encourage employers to hire individuals on the spectrum. This has been submitted to the Revenue Committee. The house committee members are Chair John Binienda of Worcester, Vice Chair William Straus of Mattapoissett, Walter F. Timilty of Milton, Joseph R. Driscoll of Braintree, Michael F. Rush of Boston, Patrick M. Natale of Woburn Linda Dean Campbell of Methuen, Thomas P. Conroy of Wayland, Steven J. D'Amico of Seekonk The senate committee members are Senators Creem of Middlesex and Norfolk, Joyce of Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth, Buoniconti of Hampden and Hampshire,

O'Leary of Cape and Islands, Panagiotakos of Middlesex and Knapik of Hampden and Hampshire.

An Executive Office of Health and Human Services budget line item of \$100,000 to establish a state task force to study existing services for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders without accompanying mental retardation, identify the needs, and report their recommendations for services to the legislature. Legislation establishing the task force has been passed in previous sessions but due to a lack of funding has never been implemented.

How you can help:

1. Look up your representative on the [Mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) website. <http://www.mass.gov/legis/citytown.htm>. If you click on their name it will list their phone number and e-mail. If you don't have the internet call AANE and ask to speak with Kathryn Jantz, our social work intern.
2. Call the legislator's office during business hours and ask to speak directly with the legislator or with a legislative aide for that legislator.
3. Tell them your name, that you are one of their constituents and a member of the Asperger's Association of New England. Tell them that you are calling because you would like them to support our bills. Explain to them what the bills are about and the committee to which they have been assigned (as described above). Tell your legislator that Representative Barbara L'Italian is the primary sponsor.
4. Give them the House numbers of the two bills ([H3838](#) and [H3908](#)) and explain to them why the bills are important to you, particularly if you have had problems with employment.
5. Tell them if they have any questions about Asperger's they can contact AANE at (617) 393-3824 and ask for Dania Jekel or Gail Kastorf.

Thank you for helping in our legislative effort!

The co-sponsors for the pilot program (House Docket Number 4064) are as follows: Barbara A. L'Italien Susan C. Fargo Jennifer M. Callahan Garrett J. Bradley William Lantigua Kathi-Anne Reinstein Matthew C. Patrick Scott P. Brown Barry R. Finegold David Paul Linsky John P. Fresolo David M. Torrisi Stephen R. Canessa Edward M. Augustus, Jr. Robert K. Coughlin Carl M. Sciortino, Jr. Alice Hanlon Peisch Denise Provost Robert L. Rice, Jr. Joseph R. Driscoll James B. Eldridge William N. Brownsberger Louis L. Kafka Tom Sannicandro Rachel Kaprielian Steven A. Tolman

The co-sponsors for the tax credit (House Docket number 4044) are as follows: Barbara A. L'Italien Susan C. Fargo Jennifer M. Callahan Garrett J. Bradley William Lantigua Kathi-Anne Reinstein Matthew C. Patrick Scott P. Brown Barry R. Finegold David Paul Linsky John P. Fresolo Robert Coughlin John D. Keenen Alice Hanlon Peisch Robert L.

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Richard Ross Tom Sannicandro Thomas Calter Steven A. Tolman