



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

PAUL HEROUX
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
2ND BRISTOL DISTRICT

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RE: H1370 An Act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in family and juvenile court proceedings.

DT: 24 June 2015

Dear Honorable Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you for considering bill *H1370, An Act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in family and juvenile court proceedings* before your committee today. This bill is timely because of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Discrimination against those with disabilities occurs in Massachusetts. Recently, the federal government ruled that Massachusetts' Department of Children and Families discriminated against a young woman when they took her daughter away based solely upon the mother's intellectual disability¹. This should not happen in Massachusetts, a state known for its programs supporting people with disabilities. The bill I have put forth would make using a parent's disability illegal as a determining factor in family and juvenile court cases. Custody decisions should be based upon a parent's ability to act in the best interest of the child, not their disability.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Once again, I urge you to report out favorably *H1370, An Act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in family and juvenile court proceedings*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Heroux".

Paul Heroux

¹http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ada.gov%2Fma_docf_lof.doc&ei=h2KIVeaZJKa1sASM8oGIAQ&usq=AFQjCNHpdLyOM7FzgFgrvjGkbKrHcCaTgw&sig2=R4Fg8t4WSbS5Xab6MWPIjg&bvm=bv.96339352,d.cWc