

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety
For HB 2283

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 11:09 PM

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Hearing Date: April 25, 2023 2:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Ana Esparza
Self /parent advocate
Katy, TX

I am the parent of two adult sons with Autism. Jose is 21 and Christian is 20. Both of my sons are 6'1 they do not have any physical features that show that they have AUtism. To anyone that encounters them on the street they are two regular Hispanic men. This law would protect my sons because if I was ever stopped by a police officer they would have first hand information that two individuals in the car have Autism. My sons may react in a way that without the police officer having first-hand knowledge that they are on the spectrum they would be in danger of being arrested or worst case scenario getting shot! My sons get very anxious and nervous and begin talking when they may not be allowed to talk or when a demand has been put on them. Let's protect our individuals with disabilities. We don't want them to end up arrested, tased or dead. I am asking you to support this bill and to help protect our individuals with disabilities in Texas.

Rosa Garcia
Nuevo Horizontes
Rio grande city, TX

hello my name is Rosa Garcia I would benefit from this law passing because my daughter has disabilities. She is autistic and does not talk it is very important for me. if something to happen law-enforcement would be notified.

Cecilia TorrezSanchez

Down by the Border

Brownsville, TX

Good afternoon, my name is Ceci Torrez Sanchez, and I am from Brownsville Tx. I, as well as my husband, Abe Sanchez, are educators with Brownsville ISD. Together, we are raising two children, Quatro, who's 15, and Sofia, 12. My youngest, Sofia, is what brings me here today to speak to you on behalf of House Bill 2283. You see, my daughter, Sofia, is identified as Autistic, Level 3, which is characterized by severe challenges in social communication as well as extremely inflexible behavior. She is also identified as Intellectually Disabled, Speech Impaired, and has a Chromosome 10 Deletion.

At 8 years, Sofia was also diagnosed with Precocious Puberty which set in motion a very volatile experience for the entire family, especially for our Sofia. Her hormonal levels were that of a 13-year-old and coupled with her disabilities, she became extremely aggressive. We had trouble at home, at school, and out in the community, which included experiences with the police.

Fortunately, most of our encounters were met with understanding and support. However, there are two incidences of many that I can speak of. One, where I was in the grips of her hands as my 4Runner rocked from side to side and another where my husband was in handcuffs, my son scared and crying, my daughter rocking in the back seat, and objects scattered about the ground. Both involved law enforcement.

With help from her doctors, Dr. Karnik, her neurologist here in Austin, and pediatrician, Dr. Ali, from home, the combinations of her medications, which includes being under the Texas Compassionate Use Program, Sergio Zarate, from Down by the Border, and the creation of the Special Needs Decal system within Cameron County have all helped Sofia. She, herself improves as she matures. However, she continues to require much support for her complex needs. We can spend anywhere from 1 to 3 hours daily driving across the Rio Grande Valley. This provides sensory input and self-regulation, and there are still times where I need to pull over and stop. I would hate this to be misinterpreted as another type of dangerous situation.

My family's experiences are not a unique one. There are a vast number of families who travel in their cars with their special needs loved ones, and many may find themselves in situations that involve police. Having a statewide system would greatly help peace officers form better decisions as to how to respond towards an individual with disability who may be traveling in that vehicle. It is important for Texas to implement such a system because it would allow for continuity across our great state. Please give House Bill 2283 your full attention, consideration, and help it to move forward. I appreciate your support for House Bill 2283, and I thank you for the opportunity in allowing me to come and speak with you today. Thank you.