

Chair Robbins, and Members of the Committee,

Thanks for having me. My name is Brad Trahan, former Chair of the Minnesota Autism Task Force back in 2012, and a parent of a son, Reece, 25 years old, with severe autism.

Every official who helped create, or allowed to continue, the now plainly visible culture of negligence within our state agencies must be held accountable. Oversight was treated as a formality that was never carried out. Accountability was dismissed as “too burdensome,” rather than embraced as a fundamental responsibility of public service. When government fails in that duty, it is *never* the powerful who suffer the consequences. It’s the most vulnerable!

The question we must ask: how did we get here? It was ALL preventable!

We got here through a combination of rapid program expansion, insufficient oversight, and a system that prioritized access without building equally strong accountability and common-sense safeguards. That imbalance created openings for bad actors, who pounced on this opportunity. This fraud is infuriating. It is a betrayal.

In 2012, Minnesota lawmakers from both parties came together to pass strong, meaningful autism insurance reform at the state level. We honored every mandate that then-Governor Dayton asked of us; however, one mandate HE didn’t even anticipate was Autism Therapy Fraud. Then in 2016, Mayo Clinic, a self-insured employer, stepped up to provide coverage for employee dependents, further strengthening access and setting a responsible example.

This fraud undermines years of bipartisan work and risks harming the very individuals the system was designed to protect. This fraud damages our future by means of 1) Reduced Access to Services, 2) Private and Self-Insured may reconsider the scope of autism coverage, and 3) Increased public doubt about autism services.

The money is gone. Accountability is all we have left.

For parents and individuals with autism, accountability is not political — it is personal. We live every day fighting for services. We have been knocked down before. But we never get knocked out. We demand transparency. We demand reform. And we demand that those responsible answer for what happened, because the individuals and families who rely on these services, as well as taxpayers, deserve nothing less.

In closing, to anyone in the Minnesota Government who allowed billions in fraud: why wouldn’t you hold any of them accountable?

Regards,

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