

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Rep. Linehan, Southington Family Advocate for Police Training Program on Children with Autism

Testify in favor of bill creating training program on children who wander



Left: Rep. Cathy Abercrombie, Rep. Liz Linehan, Logan Gibbons, William Gibbons, Antonia Gibbons, and Stephanie Gibbons at the Legislative Office Building



Right: Rep. Liz Linehan is joined by Logan Gibbons as she testifies in support of HB 6260

Rep. Liz Linehan (D-Cheshire/Southington/Wallingford) welcomed a Southington family to the Legislative Office Building today to testify in support of legislation to establish a police training program on children with autism who wander.

Logan Gibbons, a 16-year old boy with autism, and his family joined Rep. Linehan to testify in front of the Public Safety and Security Committee in favor of HB 6260. The bill would create a statewide training program similar to Logan's Project in Cheshire, which Rep. Linehan created to provide police with training on children with autism after hearing about Logan's history of wandering from home.

Research has shown that nearly half of children with autism spectrum disorder attempt to wander from a safe, supervised space. Known as elopement, autistic children engage in this behavior at a rate much higher than their peers and often wander towards water.

“Logan and the Gibbons family have been incredible advocates, and I would like to thank them for coming to the Capitol today and sharing their story. Just the thought of having a child wander from home strikes fear into the heart of any parent, and the Gibbons have been through this ordeal multiple times,” **Rep. Linehan** said. “When children with autism wander, it is critical that police have the training needed to locate them quickly and safely. I’m very proud that Logan's Project in Cheshire is already providing this training, and I believe it should be a resource available state-wide.”

When children with autism go missing, typical police methods of locating a child – such as the use of lights and loud sounds – may not be effective. The legislation would establish a training program to educate police on best practices for locating and communicating with children with autism who wander.

After receiving training through Logan’s Project, Cheshire police safely returned Logan to his family when he wandered 11 miles from his Southington home into Cheshire.

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