

News...

from the office of State Rep. Stephanie Kifowit

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Kifowit Introduces Legislation to Offer Autism ID Cards

***Advocates Say Autism Recognition Will Help
Raise Awareness and Understanding***

AURORA, Ill. – Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder would be better able to communicate with first responders under legislation sponsored by state Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, which would create an Autism Spectrum Disorder ID card.

“Those who have autism spectrum disorder sometimes display characteristics that law enforcement could have difficulty differentiating from evasive or suspicious behaviors, especially during stressful and fast paced situations like a traffic stop,” Kifowit said. “Allowing individuals with autism or their family members to conveniently share that knowledge with an ID card may help improve relationships with professionals and community members.”

Kifowit’s House Bill 4257 requires the Department of Human Services to create an Autism Spectrum Disorder ID card for those who have been medically diagnosed with the condition. Applicants would have to verify their condition through a physician. The wallet ID would also be available for purchase by guardians of those with autism.

Kifowit’s idea for this legislation came from an Alabama program started in 2014. The Alabama Department of Public Safety partnered with the Autism Society of Alabama to create an ID card for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The card states: *I Have Autism Spectrum Disorder. I have been medically diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. My medical condition impairs my ability to communicate with others. As a result I may have difficulty understanding your directions, and I may not be able to respond to your questions. I may also become physically agitated if you touch me or move too close to me. Please do not interpret my behavior as refusal to cooperate. I am not intentionally defying your instructions.* The back of Alabama’s card also includes the cardholder’s name and the name and contact information of an emergency contact.

“Those with Autism Spectrum Disorder living in Illinois should have access to the same resources as those living in other states,” Kifowit said. “This ID is a simple way to keep our residents safe and make it easier for first responders to do their job.”

House Bill 4257 awaits consideration before the House of Representatives. Kifowit is working with advocates and other legislators to strengthen this legislation over the remaining legislative session.

For more information, please contact Kifowit’s full-time constituent service office by calling **630-585-1308**, by email at Stephanie.Kifowit@att.net, or by visiting www.ILDistrict84.com.