

June 2, 2026

Senator David Rochefort
New Hampshire State Government
107 North Main Street, Room 107
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Senator Rochefort:

I am writing regarding your role in the Senate action on HB 1215 that ultimately prevented its passage.

As a parent of a non-speaking daughter who communicates using Spell2Communicate, I want you to understand the impact this decision has had on families like mine and on the broader non-speaking community throughout New Hampshire.

HB 1215 was a simple and important bill. Its purpose was to affirm that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to use their preferred method of communication, whether that method is a letterboard, typing, a speech-generating device, sign language, gestures, or another form of Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

For many non-speakers, communication is not merely a convenience—it is the means by which they participate in education, healthcare, relationships, self-advocacy, and community life. Without recognition and protection of their communication methods, they risk being ignored, misunderstood, or excluded from decisions that directly affect them.

I was deeply disappointed to learn that provisions related to mobile emergency rooms were attached to HB 1215. Whatever the merits of that separate issue may be, it had nothing to do with communication rights for individuals with disabilities. As a result of combining unrelated legislation, a bill that would have protected one of the most fundamental human rights—the right to communicate—was unable to move forward.

I respectfully ask you to explain why unrelated language was attached to HB 1215 and whether the impact of that decision on the disability community was fully considered. While legislative negotiations and amendments are a normal part of the process, the consequences in this case were significant. A bill intended to protect communication access for vulnerable citizens was effectively lost, leaving many families feeling that their concerns had become secondary to unrelated policy debates.

The people most affected by this outcome are individuals who already face extraordinary barriers to being heard. Many cannot easily call a legislator, testify publicly, or advocate for themselves in traditional ways. Their voices depend upon others being willing to listen and recognize the communication methods that work for them.

My daughter has thoughts, opinions, preferences, and dreams. Through her communication method, she is able to share them with the world. Yet without legal recognition and protection of communication access, individuals like her remain vulnerable to having their voices dismissed simply because they communicate differently.

I respectfully ask you to consider the message sent to the non-speaking community when legislation designed to protect their communication rights becomes entangled with unrelated political matters. For these individuals and their families, this was not a procedural issue. It was a deeply personal setback.

I hope that when this issue returns in a future legislative session, you will support a clean bill focused solely on communication rights for individuals with developmental disabilities and ensure that it is considered on its own merits.

The non-speaking community has spent decades fighting for the opportunity to be heard. Please do not allow their voices to become collateral damage in debates about unrelated legislation.

The failure of HB 1215 was not an abstract legislative outcome. It had real consequences for real people. It sent a message to non-speaking individuals and their families that a bill protecting their ability to communicate could be sacrificed for reasons having nothing to do with communication rights. Whether that was the intended message or not, it is the message many of us received.

I hope you will reflect on the impact of this decision and recognize that for non-speakers, communication is not a political issue—it is a civil rights issue. The people affected by HB 1215 deserve to know that their ability to communicate, to be understood, and to participate fully in society will be treated as a priority rather than a bargaining chip.

I would appreciate a response explaining why unrelated language was attached to HB 1215 and whether the resulting harm to the disability community was considered before that decision was made.

Sincerely,

Beth E. DiPasquale

Wilton, New Hampshire

belove4every1@gmail.com

(603) 801-1395