

# The Connecticut General Assembly



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## **Rep. Linehan Hails Senate Passage of Police Training Program on Children with Autism** *Bill goes to Governor's desk*



*Rep. Linehan introducing HB 6260 on the House floor in April*

**State Rep. Liz Linehan** (D-Cheshire/Southington/Wallingford) applauded the Senate's passage today of a bill she introduced to create a state-wide police training program on best practices for locating and communicating with children with autism who wander from home or adult supervision. The bill passed the House in April and now goes to the Governor's desk.

HB 6260 is based on Logan's Project in Cheshire, which **Rep. Linehan** created after hearing about Logan Gibbons, a 16-year old autistic boy from Southington with a history of wandering away from home. Logan and his family testified in favor of the bill in front of the Public Safety and Security Committee in February.

“I’m thrilled that this legislation has now been approved by the General Assembly with near unanimous support. Everyone has really come together around one goal: to ensure that children with autism who wander from home are reunited with their families safe and sound,” **Rep. Linehan** said. “Providing our police officers with this specific training helps them locate children safely and effectively. I hope that very soon we will see the success of Logan’s Project in Cheshire replicated across the state.”

Many 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, leading to higher rates of death by drowning for autistic children.

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 that police officers could complete for credit toward their continuing education requirements.

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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