

My name is Tom Carty of Suffield Connecticut, and I want to thank the legislators for taking the time to hear our case for financial support of scientifically-proven autism therapy.

My wife Rosamaria and I received our son's diagnosis of autism in 2007, and we have researched intensely to find out how we can help him recover from this disorder. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has proven to work best with our son. The structured, intense therapy provided by trained professionals has made a life-changing impact on our son. Therapists have helped our son overcome his obsessive isolation, focus on noise-making toys and repetitive behaviors. Prior to therapy, our son could only make requests through grunts, pushing, or pulling. He is now learning to verbalize his needs. Prior to therapy, our son avoided eye contact and seemed to take little pleasure in adults or other children. Our son has become more tolerant of social interaction with his parents, sister, teachers, and peers. These changes have vastly improved our quality of life by making our daughter and ourselves more optimistic about our son's future.

The great challenge is the financial cost. We have spent more than \$2000/month to pay therapists. While we will make any financial sacrifice possible for our son, we should not have to pay for the vast majority of this therapy out of our pocket. Our son's condition is clearly a medical disorder, and data has proven the effectiveness of ABA for our son and countless other children in studies published in professional journals and books. My wife and I both have extensive experience in research. We earned Ph.D. degrees at the University of Connecticut. I am a professor of history at Springfield College, and my wife is a Spanish professor at Yale University. Our extensive investigations and our personal experience convinces us that Applied Behavior Analysis is scientifically proven to offer our son the best chance at achieving a typical, normal life. We cannot understand why insurance companies fail to recognize the legitimacy of this treatment.

Thank you again for listening to the financial difficulties of families who have children with autism. Our children have kind hearts and great perseverance in working to overcome their disabilities. The state, nation, and world will benefit from helping these children develop and contribute to confront the spiritual, social, economic, and political challenges of the twenty-first century.