Friis, John

From: Julie Augeri [julieswan@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2009 6:25 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: Raised Bill 6666 Section 7

Regarding Raised Bill # 6666, Section 7
An act requiring School Districts to utilized Board Certified Behavior Analysts when and individual education plan includes applied behavior analytic services as part of a student's special education

To Whom It May Concern:

I am absolutely in favor of Raised Bill #6666, Section 7

I have a 14 year old son who has autism. I have been fortunate that his school program uses the principals of Applied Behavior Analysis overseen by Board Certified Behavior Analysts since he was 3 years old. Through the years, my son has demonstrated a variety of challenging, inappropriate, interfering, self-injurious and maladaptive behaviors. Thankfully, we have met them all by consistently implementing the principals of ABA by a BCBA. I know firsthand how critical this is in responsibly and effectively changing behavior.

In addition to being a parent, I am a disability specialist and have a private practice as a special education advocate helping parents attain appropriate services for their children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Quite frankly, I would love nothing more for all of you, through the passage of this bill, be the first step in putting me out of business. Because it is often my singular mission to secure the services of a BCBA in my student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan). I will say to the parents with whom I work, "If nothing else, we must get the frequency and duration of a BCBA written into your child's IEP." In other words, the IEP document recognizes the BCBA as a service provider with dedicated time to that student. This is easier said than done and too often requires an advocate or attorney getting involved.

In my roll as an advocate, I am literally on the front lines of this battle. I have been doing this long before the incidence of autism went through the roof and truly have a historical perspective on the growth of autism and how the State Department of Education and all of the school districts have reacted to this new challenge in our schools. Unfortunately, we are still miles from where we need to be in appropriately meeting the needs of many of our students with ASD.

Time and time and time again, I am witness to the affects of school districts inappropriately addressing the behavioral and other educational needs of child with ASD by not utilizing a BCBA. I am the person parents' call when their child is being physically restrained because there is not an appropriate behavior plan in place. I am the person they call when their child has been arrested because they have harmed another child at school because there was not appropriate behavior plan in place. I am the person they call when their child has been expelled or suspended for behaviors that have been

inappropriately addressed for far too long. Please, put me out of business. While there's much to be done, this is a crucial first step in appropriately meeting the unique educational needs of children with ASD.

Thank you for your consideration.

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