

Patrick & Maria Murphy  
274 Sunrise Hill Lane  
Norwalk, CT 06861

March 8, 2010

**By: email: [chris.calabrese@cga.ct.gov](mailto:chris.calabrese@cga.ct.gov)**

Thomas P. Gaffey, Co-Chair  
Education Committee  
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Andrew M. Fleishmann, Co-Chair  
Education Committee  
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

John W. Fonfara, Vice Chair  
Education Committee  
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Tom Reynolds, Vice Chair  
Education Committee  
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Bob Duff  
Room 2400, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding: **Bill # HB 5425**  
**An act concerning special education**

Mr. Gaffey, Mr. Fleishmann, Mr. Fonfara, Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Duff:

My name is Maria Murphy. I currently reside in Norwalk, CT. I am a parent of a child with autism. My 6 1/2 year old daughter was diagnosed with Autism from Boston's Children's Hospital when she was 2 years old. After receiving Birth to Three, we attempted to place our daughter in our district preschool located in Norwalk, CT. The elementary school staff did not have a therapist or teacher who could administer certified Applied Behavioral Analysis ("ABA"). The district was unable to provide an appropriate education to our child or any other child with autism. Due to the districts inability to properly administer certified ABA, we unilaterally placed her at Connecticut Center for Child Development ("CCCD") in Milford, CT. CCCD is a specialized school made up of certified ABA staff who provides 1:1 appropriate education to children with autism.

After just 1 year at CCCD we decided to place our daughter back in district when she was 4 years old. Myself, my husband and the CCCD staff believed she needed to be among her typical peers. This of course, brought up the important question of who will run a certified ABA program for her once she was placed back in district. Norwalk's Director of Special Education, Janie Friedlander, attempted to have us use (1) Sheila Flannigan from Benhaven (who at the time was not certified) and then (2) John Burke from The Hope Center (he too is not certified).

The district then offered up Stacy Lore from Spectrum Kids. Stacy was already working in the district when she was introduced to my family. Stacy became our daughter's certified ABA Consultant in December 2007 on behalf of Norwalk Public Schools. Stacy ran our daughter's ABA program as well as trained Brooke's 1:1 paraprofessional until August 2008.

Other parents in the Norwalk School District who were using Stacy for their children's ABA programming in the school were also using her for the home programming component. These parents became suspicious of Stacy's abilities and techniques during home component sessions. On many

occasions Stacy did not show up to administer the home programming component. Their suspicion was confirmed when they themselves investigated Stacy's background. These parents found out that (i) Stacy did not hold an ABA certification from the BACB as stated on her resume, (ii) Stacy did not graduate from NYU with a PhD or Master's Degree, as stated on her resume and (iii) Stacy did not work for who she claimed, again, as stated on her resume.

We asked ourselves, how can the Norwalk School District hire an individual who committed fraud on their resume? Did the Norwalk School District NOT do a background check? Is that possible!

When digging deeper we realized that not only did Stacy Lore lie on her resume, she also received money from both the Norwalk School District and parents for therapy that was never administered. One parent even found a bill sent to the district for a week that her family was out of town. Stacy got paid for all of the bills she submitted.

After Stacy Lore my daughter went months without a certified ABA Therapist.

To this day I am subsidizing her therapy out of my pocket. I pay the following each week: (i) \$175 for 45 minutes for certified ABA therapy (this is NOT covered by insurance, due to the fact that SB 301, Public Act No. 09-115 does not cover an employer that self-insures) (ii) \$75 + \$20 for 30 minutes of speech from a licensed speech pathologist (\$20 is co-pay) (iii) \$117 for 45 minutes of OT. That comes to \$20,124 I am paying out of my pocket each year due to the districts lack of certified professionals.

I believe it is essential to include Section 2 within HB 5425. My family is not the only one who will benefit from HB 5425. Sure there are other choices, but time and time again, newspaper article after newspaper article, nightly news story after news story you hear of how certified ABA has given these children a chance. It is the ONLY scientific proven therapy to work with children on the spectrum. It is tremendously essential that these children daily certified ABA therapy. If you have not done so, I encourage you to go and see certified ABA administered to these children. It will make quite an impression on you. Please do the right thing and include Section 2 within HB 5425.

Section 3, however, is an unwarranted, biased provision. Not to mention, how am I to afford a lawyer when I'm already paying out over \$20,000 in unnecessary bills? Do NOT include Section 3 within this Bill.

To reiterate my closing comments from my testimony: The constituents, parents, tax payers of this state URGE YOU to SWIFTLY pass Section 2 of Bill 5425.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Maria Murphy