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3-8-10 Hearing – Testimony

- I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, BCBA, who has been consulting to public schools for the past five years. My job includes developing and monitoring ABA programs for students with autism and related disorders, as well as training and transferring the technology of ABA to special educators and related service providers.
- There are hundreds of research articles that demonstrate the efficacy of applied behavior analysis in teaching students with autism. ABA is now widely recognized as the treatment of choice for these students. Many schools in Connecticut are including ABA for students with autism in their IEP's. It is essential for the individuals delivering ABA services to not only hold expertise in applied behavior analysis, but to be certified.
- Teachers and related service providers are required to hold certification. In addition, hairdressers, forklift drivers, massage therapists, graphic designers, accountants, and more are required to hold certification in order to practice within their field – there is no reason why individuals practicing within the field of ABA shouldn't be held to the same standards and be required to be certified behavior analysts, certified assistant behavior analysts being supervised by certified behavior analysts, or a person licensed by the Dept. of Health or certified by the State Department of Education whose scope of practice includes behavior analysis.
- It is crucial for individuals working with our special education students, who are a vulnerable population, to have the necessary expertise and credentials in implementing programs. These individuals are helping our children with disabilities learn more effectively, and this is the one chance our children have of learning skills necessary to produce socially significant outcomes for themselves and their families. As a vulnerable population already, our special education students are susceptible to sub-standard services and those that may not be producing positive results. Section 2 will support our students with autism whose IEP's mandate ABA by making sure they are receiving their services by a person with expertise and credentials. It is too risky for our children, as well as our families, to not pass this bill.
- Not only is this bill essential for our students with autism and their families, but it is essential to the field of education globally. Not only am I a BCBA, but I am a mother, and to be sending my two children to school to receive educations from people who are not certified in any field of practice is beyond comprehension, and not at all what we as parents and teachers should accept as the standard for Connecticut education.