

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1105

I oppose the bill to change autism services criteria. Giving professionals who are not trained in applied behavior analysis the ability to render behavior analytic services is unethical. I have worked in the field since 2006 using applied behavior analysis techniques to increase communication and independence in children and adults with autism. I have seen the wonders of successful implementation, and the dangers of implementation by those not trained in the field.

Without proper service delivery, students with autism can both not learn, and can regress, causing the cost of later treatment and lifelong care to increase. This increased cost is unnecessary, and can be avoided by giving successful support at a young age. It is harmful for the future independence and education of children with autism to be given services by people not trained and supervised in behavior analysis techniques.

Board certified behavior analysts (who must receive educational degrees specifically in applied behavior analysis, who must get 1500 supervision hours directly related to applied behavior analysis, and who must pass a difficult applied behavior analysis examination in order to practice) are legitimately qualified to create effective education and behavior analysis programs for the success of people with autism. There is a current standard requiring professionals to demonstrate specific behavior analytic skills in order to provide behavior analytic services to children with autism. This standard must be continued so children and adults with autism receive the most successful treatment possible. This bill will allow people to practice behavior analysis who are not qualified to render such services, and this is detrimental to the welfare and quality education that children with autism require and deserve.

Only trained individuals can ethically supervise and implement behavior analysis programs for future success of the child. These children deserve ethical treatment. Qualification in a different field does not indicate suitable knowledge in applied behavior analysis, and allowing non-expert practice to occur does not put the child's best interest first. We will be doing a grave disservice to children, adults, and families affected by autism by passing this bill.

I implore you--Do NOT pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Colleen Williams, M.Ed,  
Professional and Advocate