

Statement of Kristine Marino, BCBA, in support of SB 799

I would like to express my appreciation for your consideration of this legislation, SB 799, and urge you to pass this hugely important bill. As a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has worked with children on the Autism spectrum for the past 11 years, I know firsthand how fragile this particular population is. I have seen the results that a lack of services can have on the progress and general well-being of our clients, as well as on the financial and emotional well-being of their families. I cannot stress enough the magnitude of the effect that uncertified, unqualified provider could have on this population. The effect would not merely be equal to the time during which those services were provided, but far beyond that, and in some cases may take years to repair.

While I am happy to see consequences delivered for Stacy Lore's actions, I feel that far more is necessary in order to deter similar fraud in the future. It makes sense that the consequences would be equal to what is given to someone who would fraudulently pose as a speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, nurse, doctor, psychiatrist, or anyone else providing therapeutic services. Behavior Analysts are concerned with socially meaningful outcomes for all populations; our long-term goal is to help people become as successful and independent as possible, which translates directly to reduction in cost for lifelong care. While we would like to pursue the route of licensure in the future, at this point the cost would be too great to the budget. Connecticut's Birth to Three program has been requiring certified Behavior Analysts for about 10 years now, which helps lay foundation for future licensure while offering protection until budget allows us to take that route. Additionally, SB 799 directly relates to recent legislation that was passed requiring insurance companies to cover behavior analytic services, and legislation passed that requires individuals with Behavior Analysis within their scope of practice to be the service providers when a student's Individualized Education Plan calls for behavior analytic services. Finally, this legislation is likely to prompt professionals who are currently uncertified but well-intentioned and experienced to pursue certification, thus making it simpler for families, school districts and others looking for services to determine who to hire.

Thank you so much for hearing my testimony.

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