

Subject: Testimony in opposition to S.B. No. 1105

Please do not allow anyone other than Board Certified Behavior Analysts to deliver ABA services. The delivery of ABA services is a highly specialized task and cannot be undertaken by anyone other than a trained professional. Doing so would be detrimental to children with autism.

Furthermore, a.) the professionals identified in the language are not qualified to provide these services; b.) there are already not enough SLP's, special education teachers and psychologists to meet CT's current educational needs so adding additional responsibilities to these professions will not meaningfully increase the number of providers; c.) without proper service delivery students with autism not only will not learn but can regress causing the cost of later treatment and lifelong care to increase; d.) supervision and direction by a designated administrator will add to the cost of providing services while decreasing the ability of qualified personnel to do their jobs.

Darcie Crawford

Mother of a 6 year old child on the autism spectrum who receives ABA services and also currently pursuing ABA certification
Board Member, Autism Families CONNECTicut
876 North Main St
West Hartford CT 06117

Please help Connecticut's Children with Autism by sending a message by this Monday to the Education Committee at chris.calabrese@cga.ct.gov before you close this email -

Our kids need your help. Their education for years to come may hang in the balance. Please do not look the other way.

Last year the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law that would ensure that those providing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in public schools or at public expense would have the training and a credential necessary to do so. This year, the State Department of Education has proposed changes to this legislation that would enable anyone one who is certified in any other area, but who do not have any training whatsoever to provide these critical services. Please take a few minutes to write a short note to the Education Committee opposing these proposed changes.

It is very simple and will only take a minute or two of your time: Include the words "Testimony in Opposition to SB 1105" in the subject line. Restate your opposition in the text. Include your name and address. You can add additional information if you would, like but the important elements are to state that this proposed legislation would be detrimental to children with autism.

The number of emails is the critical factor – not the length of the message.

Additional points to consider include: a.) the professionals identified in the language are not qualified to provide these services; b.) there are already not enough SLP's, special

education teachers and psychologists to meet CT's current educational needs so adding additional responsibilities to these professions will not meaningfully increase the number of providers; c.) without proper service delivery students with autism not only will not learn but can regress causing the cost of later treatment and lifelong care to increase; d.) supervision and direction by a designated administrator will add to the cost of providing services while decreasing the ability of qualified personnel to do their jobs. You may also want to identify yourself as a parent, professional, public school employee, grandparent, neighbor, relative, or friend to someone with autism.

Specifically, the proposed language states that ABA providers of "including, but not limited to, persons employed as psychologists, speech therapists and positions requiring certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in special education,"

Psychologists, speech therapists, and special education teachers are not usually trained to provide ABA services. If they are, then the current law would already enable them to provide ABA services.

Even worse, the phrase "Including but not limited to" means that anyone with any type of credential may be designated to provide these service.

In addition, this bill contains the provision that those providing ABA services will be supervised and directed by "A local or regional board of education shall designate an administrator employed by the board of education to supervise the provision of applied behavior analysis services by assistant behavior analysts described in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, teachers and paraprofessionals described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section and persons described in subsection (b) of this section, if authorized to provide such services."

This means that even when a qualified Board Certified Behavior Analyst or another professional who is either certified or licensed in the state of Connecticut who has ABA within their scope of practice is involved, they cannot design or implement programming without the approval and direct involvement of a third party who is an administrator rather than someone trained to provide these services or even knowledgeable about autism.

After you send your email please forward it to others who may care about the welfare of children with autism. If you have the time and can join us at the Legislative Office Building to give testimony on Monday that would be even better. Information is below but please feel free to contact me if you need additional information, talking points or assistance submitting your email to the Education Committee.

Your truly,

Suzanne Letso, parent of a 21 year old with autism
Chief Executive Officer
Connecticut Center for Child Development, Inc.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

S.B. No. 1105 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION.

The Education Committee will hold a public hearing on **Monday, March 7, 2011 at 11:00 A.M. in Room 1E** of the LOB. Please email a PDF copy of your written testimony to chris.calabrese@cga.ct.gov by 12:00 P.M. on Friday, March 4, 2011 and include the word "Testimony" in the subject line. Written testimony will be accepted in Room 3100 of the LOB until 9:30 A.M. on the date of the hearing. Please submit 30 copies. Written testimony submitted after 9:30 A.M. will not be distributed in hard copy form. Sign-up for the hearing will begin at 8:30 A.M. in the First Floor Atrium of the LOB, will be by bill number, and will conclude at 9:30 A.M. The first hour of the hearing is reserved for elected officials. Speakers will be limited to three minutes of testimony. Unofficial sign-up sheets have no standing with the Committee. All testimony will be available at <http://cga.ct.gov/ed>.

For more information got to www.cga.ct.gov and type in bill 1105. You can then click on the proposed language if you would like to read the entire bill and proposed changes.

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