

To: Education Committee

From: Maria Dominici, parent of a daughter with autism

Date: March 7, 2011

Testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1105

My name is Maria Dominici and I have a daughter with autism. Between the ages of 3 1/2 to 5 years, my daughter was treated by a fraudulent behavior analyst in my public school in Weston, CT. My daughter is now 9 years old and still very impaired. She is non-verbal and cannot care for herself. I will never know what her capabilities may have been if she had spent that year and a half with an educated, certified behavior analyst.

An issue many people might not recognize is the importance of early intervention. With autism or any other developmental delay, early intervention is crucial while the brain is still young and forming and growing. When a proper behavior modification program is provided for children with autism during that critical "window" of learning time, then the percentage of success is much greater. And by success, I mean taking a child that may not have been able to learn or behave functionally and helping them to develop into an independent, functional individual. Applied behavior analysis is the only scientifically proven method that can take a child with autism and help them to learn on their own. And only certified behavior analysts are capable of treating our needy children. My daughter was not treated by someone that was capable or appropriate or certified.

By allowing professionals without any training or experience in ABA to treat and teach our disabled children, we are putting them at a disadvantage. Non-certified behavior analysts don't know how to teach these special children how to learn on their own. This is criminal! It is no different than sending a patient into surgery with a surgeon that is not qualified nor licensed to perform surgery. Proper behavior analysis is extremely technical and when administered by someone not credentialed or certified, this can be worse than no ABA at all.

When a child does not receive an education by a certified bcba that is properly educated in ABA, then that child runs a greater risk of becoming a needy adult. That adult then needs to be cared for by our state. This burden is tremendous. And the burden could be as much as 70 years of caring for just one person.

It is just and right to demand that all children be taught by certified behavior analysts. Anything less is criminal.