

To: Education Committee

From: Roger Letso, parent of a son with autism and staff member in a private school for autism

Date: March 6, 2011

Re: Testimony in opposition to SB 1105

1. Opposed to Section 1 changing the criteria of who is qualified to provide ABA services;
2. Opposed to adding an administrator to direct ABA services
  1. This adds cost, but also will be damaging to ABA services unless the administrator is a board certified behavior analyst.
3. I am also opposed to Section 3 as written because it would require that private school placements adhere to IDEA at the date they open. I would be in favor if the language is changed to specifically identify how private schools that are not yet approved, can comply with this law without adding cost to the private school program or to the cost of Connecticut's oversight.
4. This bill is extremely detrimental to students with autism and would only serve to reduce the effectiveness of properly qualified ABA professionals involved with the education of our children.

There are additional points to consider in opposing this proposed legislation which include:

- a.) First and foremost, the professionals identified in the proposed language are not qualified to provide these services;
  
- b.) there are already not enough speech language professionals, 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 delivery of ABA services, 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 non board certified ABA administrator will add to the cost of providing services while decreasing the ability of qualified personnel to do their jobs.

Please DO NOT approve the proposed bill SB 1105.

Thank you for your support of our struggle to make life better for our autistic children.

Sincerely,

Roger Letso

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