

Roger Letso
HB 5537

Good afternoon.

I am writing to OPPOSE HB 5537, section 6. It is bad for the children and it is bad for both professions.

This bill, if it passed, would inappropriately expand the scope of practice of Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP's) to include the practice of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) within Connecticut. ABA is not currently within the scope of practice of this profession. SLP's receive no substantive ABA training or field experience as part of their requirements to become an SLP and therefore there is absolutely no logical or meaningful purpose in awarding them the right to practice in the field of ABA. It would be a disservice and a travesty to all children that need ABA services and it would be a disservice to the parents and families of those children as well. It would also place an unfair burden on SLPs as they are not trained in the science of ABA and would not serve the needs of the students. Having SLPs practice ABA would also reflect badly on those who have chosen ABA as their profession and who are serious dedicated practitioners in the field. Does it make sense to license an electrician to be a plumber just because they both work in construction? I don't think so.

ABA is not currently within the scope of practice of Speech Language Pathologists and there is no reason it should be.

Behavior Analysis and the scope of practice of Behavior Analysts has been defined in existing CT legislation. To expand the scope of an SLP's of practice would negatively impact other professionals, including but not limited to, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and School Psychologists.

As well as being a parent, I am employed by an agency in the special education field that employs both SLP's and Behavior Analysts. They both require rigorous but vastly different training and skill sets. These disciplines are not the same by any stretch of the imagination. Being an SLP does nothing to qualify an individual to practice ABA nor to supervise that discipline.

Speech Language Pathologists are not required to take any classes in behavior analysis, nor do they have any training, or supervision, or experience requirements related to the provision of behavior analytic services as part of their training to become SLP's. Consumers of ABA services would be negatively impacted by this modification to an SLP's scope of practice.

Any proposed expansion of an SLP's scope of practice must first be reviewed in accordance with Public Act 11-209, An Act Concerning the Department of Health's Oversight Responsibilities Relating to Scope of Practice Determinations for Health Care Professionals. This has not occurred.

To summarize, I OPPOSE HB 5537, section 6, and I urge you to protect special needs children and adults in this great state of Connecticut by defeating this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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