

Kristine Marino

HB 5537

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition of HB 5537 Section 42 (6), a bill which proposes to expand the scope and practice of Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP's) in Connecticut to include a provision of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). I am the Clinical Director of the Connecticut Center for Child Development, a school for students with Autism, where I have worked in the field of ABA and Special Education for 14 years. In my experience, I have collaborated effectively with a number of SLPs, and would certainly testify to the importance and value of their services for our population. However, I have serious concerns regarding any proposed legislation that would allow individuals to expand their work to areas for which they are not qualified. Speech and Language Pathologists and Behaviors Analysts each have very specific training and experience in their respective fields. SLPs do not receive any training or education in Applied Behavior Analysis as part of their graduation requirements. The populations who are commonly prescribed ABA services possess very fragile learning profiles, and often engage in behaviors that often put themselves and others at risk. While SLPs can certainly be successful applying the techniques that they are trained on with these learners, to have them step beyond that role without sufficient further training could not only inhibit the progress of the client, but could potentially put the client and others around him or her at serious risk of harm. Additionally, as per Connecticut Public Act 11-209, any profession must submit a request to the Department of Public Health for a Scope of Practice review (which was not done in this case), before submitting legislation to modify that scope and practice.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,
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