

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Deborah Olchek and I am a resident of Madison, CT. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and work for Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) in North Haven, CT. The reason for my email is to support sections 23 – 29 of SB 1089 “An Act Concerning Mental Health Services.” I am a full time consultant working in the public school systems and also provide intensive in-home behavior analytic supervision supports to families and children in need of significant behavior supports and interventions in their homes.

I have been providing behavior analytic services to children, families, and school districts all over the country for over 20 years. This was a long time before behavior analysis was widely recognized, (as it is today) as an effective, evidenced based set of methodologies based in a specific philosophy used to effectively teach skills and successfully address many different types of behaviors and issues.

I have worked in many different types of settings and have worked collaboratively with many licensed mental health professionals including physicians, social workers and psychologists, to name a few. My current co-workers seek me out for my expertise, just as I seek them out for theirs. All of these individuals I whom I speak and work collaboratively with are licensed to perform their work, and I am not, because there is no license available in Connecticut.

This is a problem for many different reasons. As it stands right now, anyone in the state of Connecticut can call themselves a behavior analyst, and have absolutely no training in behavior analysis, invariably, confusing consumers and, when services fail, lending the entire legitimate behavior analytic community a bad name.

There are 19 states who have already put licensure in place for Behavior Analysts. Doing so in Connecticut will protect consumers and allow consumers access to professionals skilled in the area of behavior analysis through the new Medicaid legislation, which right now, the way it is written, is prohibitive for BCBA's who are not licensed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully request that you vote to pass SB 1089 sections 23-29 as written.

Debbie Olchek