

1089

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Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1089, which proposes licensure for Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts. First, I'd like to extend my gratitude to you for your attention to this area, and for considering my testimony. I am a Clinical Director an organization which provides an array of services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders. I am also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and have been working in the field for 15 years. This bill would bring Connecticut up to speed with surrounding states who now have licensure for BCBA's and BCaBA's, including New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and with the now 19 and counting states who have gone this route.

Unfortunately, without the protection of licensure there are people who present themselves as "behavior specialists", "behavior therapists" or similar titles, but who are not certified and often times do not have the proper training and experience. It has been my personal experience that families and school districts become confused by these titles, and they often hire people who are well-intentioned but not sufficiently educated to do the work that they is being asked of them. I have personally experienced the detrimental effects that the work of an unqualified person has on the vulnerable populations with whom we work. In the past two years, two of my students have been hospitalized because their behavior at home was so severe that they and their families were in grave danger. Both were receiving services at home from people who claimed to be behavioral specialists, but were not certified BCBA's and were not implementing effective treatments. Both of these students were doing well in school at the time under the direction of Board Certified Behavior Analysts, and had they had the same level of support in their homes, these situations likely could have been avoided.

I feel that is imperative that behavior analysts obtain licensure so that consumers can be better protected and informed, and the situations that my students and their families experienced can be avoided. With other states now licensing BCBA's and BCaBA's, those who are practicing uncertified in those states will no longer be able to do so, which poses a risk that they will cross state borders to practice in Connecticut. Alternatively, if Connecticut requires licensure then these individuals would be more likely to obtain the proper education and training so that they can continue to practice, which would increase the number of professionals who are able provide quality treatment in the state.

Again, I thank you very much for considering my testimony, and urge you to please pass SB 1089 Sections 23 – 29 as written.

Sincerely and Respectfully,
Kristine L. Marino, MS, BCBA