

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

I'm writing in support of SB135 with the -1 and -2 amendments, to strengthen regulation of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services.

SB135, as amended, would:

- Make the employer, in addition to the practitioner, legally accountable for adhering to existing Oregon law governing the practice of behavior analysis.
- Clarify that the unlicensed practice of Applied Behavior Analysis is illegal and give the Health Licensing Office the authority to take enforcement action against unlicensed providers.

When parents of autistic children discuss the horrible abuse case of an autistic child by an ABA therapist, many are surprised that the therapist who abused the child was unlicensed. It is often assumed that professionals working with children have appropriate licenses and background checks. It's important that Oregon legislators try to do everything possible to prevent similar cases happening in the future. Imagine rejecting SB135 and the proposed amendments and later learning about another local abuse case that could have been prevented through the passage of the bill and its amendments. Please, do not let that happen. Special needs children are especially vulnerable to abuse, it is in your power to help protect them.

Protecting special needs children also means making sure that the quality of care they receive is high and follows the industry standards. I've seen instances when employers prevented ABA practitioners from delivering quality care to the children in their care and instructed to engage in conduct contradictory to professional guidelines. It should be possible to hold such employers, and not just ABA practitioners, accountable for their actions harming children.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Terdal