

Senator Sara Gelsler
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB710-OPPOSE

Dear Madam Chair and members of the committee,

I'm a parent of a child with special needs and I am so moved by your desire to keep all children with special needs in our state safe.

My ten-year-old son was diagnosed with autism at the age of two, and since then, he has received intensive, center-based ABA therapy. Our son struggles with things like emotional regulation, impulse control, anxiety, executive functioning, and behavioral challenges. Finding a safe place for him to learn, socialize, and work on improving his skills has been incredibly difficult. After years of changing schools, trialing different medications, being kicked out of programs, and trying different therapies, we were blessed to find an ABA center-based provider (Aim High Impact) that was willing and able to work with our son despite his history of disruptive behavior. Their staff is not only caring and compassionate, but tremendously qualified to work with children like my son, whose difficult behaviors were preventing him from engaging in social settings like school, extracurricular activities, and family outings. Our son's most challenging days can include aggressive outbursts, destruction of property, and other dangerous behaviors. In these cases, the use of restraint and seclusion become a necessary tool to keep him and others safe, preventing injury, and reducing agitation.

It is important to me that all children are safe while receiving the necessary services to improve their quality of life and increase their access to the community. I am **not** concerned about my child's safety while in the care of my ABA team because I know that they are licensed professionals monitored by the Health Licensing Office (Behavior Analysis Regulatory Board) and also carry a national certification (Behavior Analysis Certification Board) that has a strict code of ethics. I feel confident that my child is in the care of professionals who are well suited to provide appropriate and effective treatment.

The passing of SB710 would create a level of licensing that is redundant and unnecessary for ABA clinics and would likely limit the growth of clinic-based ABA services in our state. Clinic based services have been life-changing for our family. We have seen significant improvement in our son's ability to participate in social settings, regulate difficult emotions, make friends, and manage his anxiety. Our son's behavior has improved tremendously, and with that, so has our quality of life. The passing of this bill could prohibit other children in the state from receiving the services that my family has benefited from.

Additionally, the rules around restraint included in this bill would likely prohibit providers from being able to work with children like mine by creating a level of bureaucracy that is too costly and by limiting the types of restraints that are possible. It is important to me that a child like mine has a safe place to go to receive the services he deserves.

I strongly urge you to revise SB710 and consider the impact this bill would have on our children who have significant behavioral needs and who have a right to effective treatment.

Sincerely,

Belen Molina Prieto