

Submitter: Corey Stump

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2421

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the committee,

I'm writing to ask you to support HB2421 – which fixes critical licensing and regulatory issues with the practice of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy in Oregon, and enhances patient safety.

I have been working in the field of ABA since 2009. Proudly, I am a Neurodivergent provider of ABA and work tirelessly to ensure Neurodivergent affirming practices are adopted across multidisciplinary providers, family systems and advocates alike. Before I was a clinician, I was a Neurodivergent individual with moderate behavioral and learning challenges as a child. I was a niece to an Aunt with significant care needs. And today, I am a mother to a Neurodivergent child. Over my lifetime, both personally and professionally, I have seen the importance and the effectiveness of safe and ethical ABA practices and am deeply devoted to improving services for our families in Oregon and Washington. As a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and Licensed Behavior Analyst in the states of Oregon and Washington I serve the Autistic community across the lifespan from infancy through adulthood. Alongside my work as a clinician, I also teach an introductory course on ABA at Oregon State University in the undergraduate School of Psychological Science. At the state level I serve my community as a member of both the Behavior Analysis Regulatory Board, which regulates certain ABA providers, and the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder. I write not as a member of the board or commission, but rather in my personal capacity as a behavior analyst treating Autistic patients and those affected by other behavioral health conditions.

ABA therapy is very important for many individuals with autism and other behavioral health conditions, to improve attention and focus, executive function, adaptive life skills, social nuances, and communication skills; and to decrease challenging behaviors that may be damaging or dangerous to the learner, others and their environment. There are currently over 1,800 professionals licensed or registered to practice ABA therapy in the state of Oregon – providing essential behavioral health services for thousands of people.

HB2421 fixes critical gaps and issues with licensing and regulation of ABA therapy in Oregon, and improves patient safety. Here are a few of the critical issues that HB2421 will fix:

Child abuse reporting: unlike essentially every other professional that has any

contact with children, ABA therapists are currently exempt from the responsibility to report child abuse. Even dog catchers in Oregon must report child abuse – but not ABA therapists.

Gay conversion therapy: Oregon prohibits the harmful practice of gay conversion therapy to attempt to change a child's sexual orientation by psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, and occupational therapists – but NOT by ABA therapists.

Professional misconduct by ABA interventionists: due to a drafting error, the Health Licensing Office currently has NO authority to discipline the Registered Behavior Analysis Interventionists who work most closely with disabled children, without direct supervision. This means that even if an interventionist is convicted of abusing a patient, there is no way to even rescind their registration authorizing them to practice ABA.

Duty to report unprofessional conduct, arrests, and convictions: Oregon requires all other health professionals to report prohibited or unprofessional conduct by other licensees or their own criminal convictions – but not ABA therapists.

Please support HB2421.

Sincerely,
Corey Stump