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RE: In Support of HB2421

To Chair Nosse and members of the House Health Care Committee:

As Executive Director of the Autism Society of Oregon and as a parent of Autistic children, 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.

The Autism Society of Oregon is the largest autism advocacy organization in Oregon and the only one that operates state-wide. We represent everyone in the Autism community, including Autistic individuals and their families, across the autism spectrum and throughout the lifespan. Our mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. We do not charge for our services and there are no membership fees.

Over 9,000 children are identified as having Autism Spectrum Disorder in Oregon. Their family's access ASO as a resource throughout Oregon. Many families chose to access ABA therapy to address symptoms associated with Autism, including my family. My Autistic, nonverbal son received ABA therapy from age 4 to 9. It is extremely important that ABA services are delivered safely and professionally to a population that is uniquely vulnerable.

HB2421 fixes critical gaps and issues with licensing and regulation of ABA therapy in Oregon, and improves patient safety, including:

- 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.
- 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, often without direct supervision. This means that even if an Interventionist is convicted of abusing a patient, there is currently 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.

We are respectfully requesting your support for HB2421, a critical bill which supports the Autism community and an Autistic individual's right to reach their maximum potential while being protected from abuse along the way.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Tobi Rates
Executive Director
Autism Society of Oregon