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Written Testimony in Support of HB 1530

Chairman Lee and Senate Human Services Committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Katherine Terras, and I practice as an educational consultant in North Dakota. I primarily work in schools with students whose behavior is often violent toward themselves, others, and property. I strongly support HB 1530 as it was initially introduced, which includes the reinsertion of the following:

5. Applied behavioral analysis to provide coverage to both assess and treat common behavioral problems across the lifespan of individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnoses.

The behavioral needs of students are increasing across all ages and grade levels, even in preschool. Currently, Medicaid reimbursement for applied behavior analysis (hereinafter ABA) is only for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The students whom I work with in the field include those with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances, other health impairments (e.g., ADHD, Tourette's syndrome), and traumatic brain injury. Applied behavior analysis is a research-based treatment proven effective across psychological and medical diagnoses, as well as across the lifespan. The claim that applied behavior analysis is only effective for treating Autism is simply inaccurate and cannot be supported with current, peer reviewed research. On page 2, you will find examples of scientific journals that would report the efficacy of ABA across the lifespan for individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnoses.

To illustrate further, university training programs that lead to licensure as applied behavior analysts must maintain a training program that focuses on applied behavior analysis for individuals across a lifespan and with diverse behavioral needs, conditions, and diagnoses. I know this firsthand because Ms. Cristine Deaver and I started the graduate ABA program at the University of North Dakota.

Lastly, I am asked repeatedly by parents and group homes if I can come into their homes to help implement the behavioral interventions showing positive results in the school. My scope of practice is to support the child/youth in the school setting. With expanded Medicaid reimbursement in place to educate parents and caregivers, individuals in need of treatment would be supported across environments for a more expeditious and lasting behavioral change.

I strongly encourage a **Do Pass for HB 1530**. This concludes my testimony, and I will now stand for questions.

ABA Research

