

Senate Bill 2190

Senate Human Services

Madam Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee

My name is Vicki Peterson, I am a Family Consultant for Family Voices of ND. Family Voices of ND is the statewide Family to Family Health Information and Education Center in ND. My role as a consultant is to support families who have children and youth with chronic health conditions, disabilities, and special health care needs. Family Voices of ND connects families to resources, application assistance, navigate systems of care, education, training, and emotional support.

I am writing this testimony in favor of SB 2190. This bill would allow for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to a wider variety of persons with psychological and medical diagnosis. Children and youth of a wide variety of diagnostics including Intellectual Disability, Down Syndrome, Anxiety and Behavioral Disorders, and even in some cases Traumatic Brain Injury. Currently ABA is the gold standard for treatment of autism spectrum disorders, this bill would look beyond just the Autism Spectrum to help those who could benefit from this individualized therapy based on presenting behaviors.

ABA is designed to promote positive and healthy behaviors in place of behaviors that are possibly disruptive and, in some cases, harmful. I speak of behaviors, but I am speaking of communications. ABA can be used for skill development which for many children and youth with a wide variety of diagnosis, would lead to independence, socialization and possibly a skill that can be used in an employment opportunity.

Currently in ND, ABA therapy is restricted to those with an autism spectrum disorder when this specialized therapy could be supporting many others with positive outcomes. In my role as a Family Consultant, I many times must inform parents who have children on Medicaid call looking for the resource of ABA therapy that it is not available except for those with an Autism Diagnosis. It can be devastating for a parent to hear that the therapy is not available and not sure where to go after that.

I urge you to vote a DO PASS on SB2190, so others may benefit from the individualized ABA therapy.

Thank you for your time.

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