

March 27, 2007

The Honorable Florence Shapiro  
Senate Education Committee  
P.O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711

Re: Texas Senate Bill 1000 for educating children with autism

Dear Senator Shapiro:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1000 to create an Autism Services Accessibility Program (ASAP).

I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and I work as a Case Supervisor for the Center for Autism and Related Disorders in Austin. My job has afforded me the opportunity to work with many children with autism, their families, and their teachers. I have observed parents struggle to locate and access appropriate educational services for their children. I have observed some teachers who work effectively with these children and some who, for various reasons, do not. The Autism Services Accessibility Program would allow families more choice in accessing educational programs and teachers that are able to help their children learn.

I offer for your consideration one exception to the bill. As it is currently written, the bill excludes home-based education. For some children with autism, however, particularly young children between the ages of 3 and 5, the home may be the most appropriate site for learning. Research has demonstrated that early and effective intervention for children with autism can produce lasting results. Trained teachers can work effectively in the home setting using materials that are meaningful to the child to produce learning that is functional and lasting. I would ask that you consider amending the bill to allow for home-based services for certain children.

The Autism Services Accessibility Program has the potential to change the lives of families of children with autism by offering greater accessibility to appropriate and effective educational programs. Thank you for supporting such a meaningful initiative.

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