



## **SB 5488 - Behavior Analysis Licensure**

### **Introduction/Background**

The Washington Association for Behavior Analysis asks for your support for SB 5488, the behavior analyst licensure bill.

Over the past 40 years a substantial body of literature has demonstrated the successful use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to reduce problem behavior and increase appropriate skills for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism and related disorders. Autism, for example, is a complex mental health disorder characterized by deficits in social and communication skills and effective evidence based therapy for this population requires professionals who have extensive behavior analytic background.

The Department of Health recently issued a final Sunrise Review on the question of Behavior Analyst Licensure, recommending licensure for behavior analysts and assistant behavior analysts. In addition, the Department put forward recommended legislative language that addressed a number of concerns raised in the Sunrise Review process. The recommended language is embodied in SB 5488.

### **Rationale/Need**

The high incidence of autism and behavioral disorders, and the demand for ABA services creates a crucial need for easily identifiable and credible providers. The Department noted there was wide support for creating a state credential for behavior analysis, especially with respect to treatment of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Individuals with ASD are vulnerable, and many are at risk of engaging in aggressive or self-injurious behaviors. ABA by a qualified provider can greatly reduce those risks. However, while many behavior analytic methods are powerful, they can easily be misused and abused by those who lack the necessary training.

Adoption of SB 5488 will assure consumers, employers, and the state that license holders meet the standards for practicing ABA that are set by the profession and are incorporated in laws to license or otherwise regulate ABA practitioners in 19 other state. This law will allow appropriately credentialed members of other professions to practice behavior analysis without being licensed, provided that the practice of behavior analysis is in that profession's scope of practice and the individual's scope of training and competence. Lastly, this law will provide consumers of ABA services protection from untrained providers.

For the reasons noted above, and based on the substantial body of analysis by the Department of Health in the Sunrise Review, please support SB 5488.

For more information and discussion of these and other issues regarding behavior analysis in Washington State, please contact Christopher Jones at [chrjones@washingttonaba.org](mailto:chrjones@washingttonaba.org)