

February 13, 2023

Chair Lee Johnson
Vice-Chair Josh Miller
PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND LABOR COMMITTEE- HOUSE

Re: House Bill 1189 (Clowney)
TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS BEHAVIOR ANALYST LICENSURE ACT

Dear Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Miller, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you today on behalf of The Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) in support of House Bill 1189.

CASP is a non-profit association of organizations committed to providing evidence-based care to individuals with autism. CASP represents the autism provider community to the nation at large, including government, payers, and the general public. We provide information and education and promote standards that enhance quality of care. We are also home to the clinical practice guidelines for applied behavior analysis, "[Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers \(2nd ed.\)](#)"¹(Practice Guidelines).

We strongly support the licensure of Behavior Analysts in the State of Arkansas and appreciate the efforts of Representative Clowney and Senator Hammer to move it forward. As you consider the legislation, we ask for the following important considerations:

- **Certification by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board be specifically referenced.** As stated in the previously referenced Practice Guidelines:

The BACB is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation established to meet professional credentialing needs identified by Behavior Analysts,

¹ Council of Autism Service Providers. 2020. *Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and managers (2nd ed.)* <https://casproviders.org/asd-guidelines/>.

governments, and consumers of behavior analysis services. The mission of the BACB is to protect consumers of behavior analysis services worldwide by systematically establishing, promoting, and disseminating professional standards. The BACB has established uniform content, standards, and criteria for the credentialing process that are designed to meet:

- The legal standards established through state, national, and case law;*
 - The accepted standards for certification programs; and*
 - The “best practice” and ethical standards of the behavior analysis profession.*

BACB certification credentials or standards are currently the basis for licensure in the U.S. states where Behavior Analysts are licensed. Basing licensure on BACB credentials is cost effective and ensures that critical competencies regarding practice and research are periodically reviewed and updated by practitioners and researchers. Whether it is used as the basis for licensure or as a “free-standing” credential, BACB certification credentials are recognized in those states where insurance reform laws have been enacted and in other states as well.

We respectfully request that the bill language be revised if possible as follows:

17-97-605 (4) Evidence of his or her current certification by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.® (BACB®) as a board certified Behavior Analyst or a board-certified Behavior Analyst-doctoral verified by the board.

- Appropriate Representation on the Proposed State Board of Mental Health.** It is our understanding that HB 1359 proposes to incorporate licensure of Behavior Analysts within a proposed State Board of Mental Health Professionals. **It is important that, similar to representatives from the current Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling, the State Board of Examiners of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, the Arkansas Psychology Board, and the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board, that licensed Behavior Analysts have specific representation on the State Board of Mental Health Professionals as their profession is independent of those listed above.**

Should you need additional information or have questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jursitti@casproviders.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Ursitti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith Ursitti
Vice President of Government Affairs

C: Representative Nicole Clowney
Senator Kim Hammer