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Mr. Steven Sepe  
Committee Clerk  
House Health and Human Services Committee  
State of RI General Assembly  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

March 17, 2025

Dear House Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for ABA Bill H5253, which aims to improve access to applied behavior analysis (ABA) treatment for individuals with autism by reducing age limitations and ensuring appropriate funding for services. As you are aware, autism is a complex disorder that significantly impacts an individual's behavior, communication, and social interaction. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 36 children are diagnosed with autism. The prevalence of autism has been rising steadily, making it the most common of all serious childhood disorders.

Fortunately, research consistently demonstrates that ABA is an effective treatment for individuals with autism across the lifespan. Both national and international studies confirm that ABA interventions can lead to significant improvements in cognitive, adaptive, and social skills for children, adolescents, and adults. The success of ABA in enhancing the lives of individuals with autism is well-documented and provides a clear case for supporting its accessibility.

There are also important financial implications to consider. A study by Harvard estimated that the lifetime cost of supporting an individual with autism can reach approximately \$3 million (Datz, 2006). However, intensive, evidence-based interventions like ABA can reduce these costs by up to \$1 million per child (Jacobson, Mulick, & Green, 1998). Given that there are currently 2,984 school-aged individuals with autism in Rhode Island, providing access to appropriate intervention could potentially save the state as much as \$2.9 billion over the course of their lifetimes.

This bill is critical in ensuring that individuals with autism can access medically necessary treatment. By supporting ABA therapy, we will not only improve the lives of individuals and their families but also create long-term benefits for the entire community and state of Rhode Island.

Should you require any additional information or data when considering this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me. We appreciate your support for this vital legislation and thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
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