



Nebraska Speech•Language•Hearing Association
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January 26, 2023

Senator Ben Hansen, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

IN RE: LB 123

Chairman Hanson and Members of the Committee:

The Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association (NSLHA) would like to submit this letter as our ***(neutral or opposition to be determined)*** testimony on LB 123, the ABA Practice Act.

Speech language pathologists are highly educated professionals trained in the field of communication including, but not limited to, the understanding and use of language whether it be receptive, expressive, pragmatic or social language. The minimum entry level of this profession is a Master's Degree. We serve an important role as a part of multidisciplinary team evaluating speech, communication, and swallowing, identifying speech language impairments, identifying individual's strengths and weaknesses, and developing plans of care to meet the needs of children and adults with communication and swallowing impairments.

Evaluating and treating pragmatic or social language impairment is an area especially important to those on the autism spectrum. We bring to the team, a solid understanding of the unique communication needs of those on the autism spectrum and should not be replaced by applied behavior analysts or assistants. While Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is one form of treatment, it is not the only form of treatment.

NSLHA recommends that the committee consider amendment below that would alleviate our concerns:

The practice of applied behavior analysis excludes diagnosis of disorders, psychological testing, psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, psychoanalysis, and counseling, or the diagnosis or treatment of hearing, speech, swallowing and communication disorders as defined in the Nebraska Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Practice Act 38-507 and 38-508.

Thank you for your consideration of NSLHA's recommended amendments to LB 123. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Mitchell Ruskamp, M.S., CCC-SLP, NSLHA President at mlruskamp@columbushosp.org.

Mitchell Ruskamp MS CCC SLP