

testimony

From: Ken Miyasato [ken.miyasato@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 11:20 AM
To: testimony
Cc: ken.miyasato@hawaiiintel.com; ken.miyasato@hawaiiintel.net
Subject: 3/17/08 1pm Room 16 - Senate Health Committee hearing for HB 2727

L A T E

To the Honorable Senate Health Committee Chair Senator David Ige and Vice-Chair Senator Carol Fukunaga

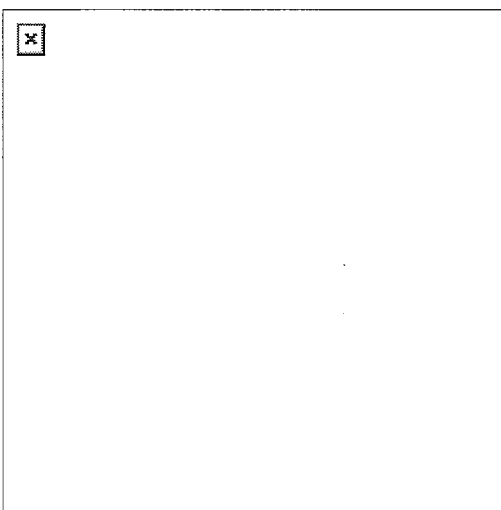
RE: Support for HB 2727 "Dylan's Law" Relating to Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Therapy

I am testifying in favor of "Dylan's Law" HB2727 Relating to Health Insurance coverage for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy for persons diagnosed with autism.

I am a parent of 4 children. Two of my children, Leigh Wong-Miyasato (6) and Dylan Wong-Miyasato (8), have both been diagnosed with autism. After much research and discussion with child psychologists and psychiatrists specializing in autism, we decided on using ABA therapy to treat their conditions based on a proven track record. ABA techniques were pioneered based on extensive research done by Dr. Ivar Lovaas of the University of California at Los Angeles (see <http://www.lovaas.com/research.php> for further information), and ABA's efficacy has been proven through various studies conducted at UCLA and other institutions. The Surgeon General has recognized ABA as an effective therapy for autism.

In Leigh's case, she was found to be over a year and a half delayed in her speech and language when she was diagnosed with autism. Thanks to intensive ABA therapy, Leigh's speech and language skills have improved to the point where she is enrolled in a regular education kindergarden class at Lanikai Elementary. She is progressing to the point where she has achieved some age-appropriate language skills based on standardized testing. Without ABA therapy, this progress would have not been possible, and Leigh would have been placed in a special education classroom and the associated higher costs of a special education program. These potential cost savings over Leigh's elementary, middle school and high school education along with her future as a contributing member to society need to be considered in evaluating the importance of making ABA therapy more widely available as a medical treatment option for autistic children.

In Dylan's situation, intensive ABA therapy has not only helped him to acquire some speech and language skills, but has also been used for critical life skills such as toileting, personal hygiene, and personal safety (e.g. learning not to run in a busy parking lot or to stop self-injurious behaviors).



Other states (South Carolina, Indiana, Texas) have passed legislation allowing ABA therapy to be covered by health insurance. These states have conducted studies and have found minimal impact to health insurance rates.

National statistics show that autism now affects one in 150 children. Making ABA therapy available will help many of them to improve their lives. I respectfully ask the Senate Health Committee to pass HB2727 and help our autistic keiki.

Sincerely,

Ken Miyasato
Parent of Leigh and Dylan Wong-Miyasato

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L A T E

March 17, 2008

Representative David Ige, Chair
Senate Health Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Representative Carolyn Fukunaga
Vice-Chair,
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Monday, March 17th at 1 p.m. in Room 16

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT for HB2727 HD1, Relating to Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Senate Committee on Health

Dear Chair Ige and Vice-Chair Fukunaga, and the members of the Health Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support of House Bill 2727, otherwise known as Dylan's Law. This important bill mandates health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders.

My husband and I have just completed a documentary about autism called Beautiful Son. We interview hundreds of people, mostly parent of children with autism. From this experience I know that the autism community is in crisis. Mothers and fathers shared intimate stories about their intense daily struggles. Stories about mother's selling wedding rings, families mortgaging their homes to pay for services, a ninety percent divorce rate, grandparents going back to work to help make ends meet, & spouses committing suicide because the situation was so dark.

This autism epidemic has created a system which is overwhelmed. Families are left to fend for themselves with those that have the better education and connections having a much better chance at helping their child. Passing Dylan's law would greatly help to alleviate this crisis.

This bill would help businesses keep employees at work. Microsoft is one of the few companies that provide coverage for autism services. They know that by helping these children, you will essentially make a more productive community. Parents will be more productive at work, families will be healthier and happier.

Please support this fair and just bill.

Aloha & Mahalo
Julianne King
320 Po'op'o Place
Kailua, Hawaii 96734