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**In regards to 2631 requiring insurance companies to cover treatment of
Autism Spectrum Disorders, I am in favor of the bill.**

I am a Hawaii-licensed psychologist with two certificates from the University of Hawaii Center for Disabilities Studies and more than 15 years of experience working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). I think it's a great idea to put the treatment of Autism in the hands of trained psychologists and certified ABA specialists (and perhaps take some pressure off of the Department of Education to provide services in the blurry gap between what does and does not fall within the purview of the "educational model"). I'm concerned about the caps, but I understand why they're necessary. I would only ask that the caps be adjusted annually for inflation.

I am also a bit uncomfortable with the equal standing the ABA certified therapists are being given to the psychologists. It kind of says, "they're at the same level," when this is in fact, not the case. ABA is a model of treatment, but certified ABA specialists may only know the aspects of the model in which they've been trained and may not understand or necessarily have to keep abreast of changes in the research base, new strategies being implemented that may be "spinoffs" of ABA, or empirically supported alternative treatments. They may not be trained to be consumers of research, only implementers of a model of treatment. I don't know enough about their certification requirements to know whether these issues will arise or not, but I do think that Psychologists receive broad and intensive training in scientific inquiry, consumption of research, hypothesized causes of ASDs, the assessment and treatment of ASDs and related issues, such as self-injurious behaviors, use of multi-modal, multi-method assessment, cultural competency, etc. I would hope the ABA certified therapists would be required to be similarly qualified.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to share my mana'o.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D.