

3/28/25

Written Testimony in favor of HB1480

My name is Dr. Renee DeBoard-Lucas and I am a psychologist specializing in work with children and teens impacted by trauma. I previously worked at a Child Advocacy Center and helped support families in the aftermath of physical and sexual abuse. I believe strongly in CACs and their missions' focus on reducing and preventing childhood trauma.

I'm writing today in favor of House Bill 1480. This Bill closes an important loop that currently exists where children may and have been, suddenly and traumatically separated from their therapist if treatment ends unexpectedly. At the CAC where I worked, 40 children and families experienced an abrupt and unexplained end to their existing trauma therapy when myself and several of my colleagues were terminated.

Sometimes people ask me how I can do this work when I see so many children in painful situations. I love this work and I do it because I can help children feel better. When my colleagues and I were terminated, I immediately worried for the impact on these children. I worried that they would think that I had abandoned them, that I didn't care, and that they didn't matter. I worried that one client who had experienced recent thoughts of suicide may be in danger when his treatment ended without warning. This family was matched with someone who was not trained in the child's treatment which disrupted their care and made the family understandably concerned. Fortunately, this family was able to find me through LinkedIn. They were distraught at the separation and at the fact that they were denied information on how to find me. I still worry about the impact on the families that were not able to find me and who may still think that yet another person who was supposed to care for them, abandoned them.

I care deeply about my patients and my ethical duty to do no harm. It was devastating to be prevented from upholding my duty, which I typically would have exercised by informing my patients of my departure and by having a termination session. The children and families seeking care at a CAC have already been through enough. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and to have this current loophole closed. HB1480 would close these loops by ensuring that professionals working at CACs have the proper training and credentials and that a continuity of care plan is in place.