

March 18, 2016

Madame Chair Harhart and members of the Pennsylvania House Licensure Committee:

My name is Tony Elhadj and I am the father of a daughter with Rett Syndrome. Rett Syndrome is a mutation on the X chromosome on the MECP2 gene. 1 in 10,000 girls get this disease. For my daughter it has stolen her ability to walk and talk. She has seizures every day. She is fed through a G-tube due to her inability to swallow correctly. However, her brain functions normally. Imagine the symptoms of Autism, Cerebral palsy, Parkinson's, Epilepsy, and Anxiety disorders... ALL IN ONE LITTLE GIRL!

I am writing to give my support to House Bill 1438 seeking to create a state board of professional music therapy licensure that will recognize the MT-BC (music therapist - board certified) national credential in Pennsylvania. This bill is important because it will allow Pennsylvania citizens to more easily access music therapy services and it will protect the public by ensuring that these services are provided by trained and qualified practitioners.

My child Caroline has received music therapy services for the past 8 years. Music therapy has been instrumental in our long and painful road of providing care to our daughter. The music therapist would come and interact with Caroline and keep her attention through the rhythm and melody of the music she played. Once we realized how well my daughter responded to music we incorporated it into her other therapies such as Speech, Occupational, Physical Therapy and the educational teacher. On the advice of the music therapist we played various tunes for my daughter to help her focus on the task at hand. Our music therapist also made a recording of some relaxing guitar music to aid in anxiety and sleep. We found that when the Music therapist co-treated with the other therapists, the session became very productive. At one point, 2 years ago, there was a funding issue with our Music therapist. The new rule stated that the therapist could no longer come to Caroline to treat her so we asked the school district to add the treatment into my daughter's IEP which they did and not only that they also obtained music therapy for the entire school district which meets once a week throughout the school year for all the students.

My daughter has specialized medical needs. Music therapists are trained and nationally certified professionals that are educated in a way that can meet my daughter's needs. No other music provider should be trusted to work in a clinical manner with the intricate needs of my daughter and all people who have complex diagnoses.

Please support efforts to establish a state board of professional music therapy licensure by voting "yes" on House Bill 1438.

Sincerely,  
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