



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 12 2019

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 163 without my signature.

This bill seeks to change the qualification standards necessary to be a qualified autism service professional or paraprofessional. When the Legislature enacted SB 946 (Steinberg, Chapter 650, Statutes of 2011), it clearly anticipated subsequent action to develop a comprehensive structure to license providers of behavioral health treatment to individuals with autism spectrum disorder. A formal licensing scheme that includes clinical expertise and administrative oversight is a more appropriate venue to address qualification standards for practitioners, ensure quality of care, and provide effective consumer protection. I encourage the Legislature to complete the work begun by SB 946.

In addition, by removing the health plan coverage exemption for contracts in the Medi-Cal program, this bill inadvertently creates conflicting requirements within the Medi-Cal program that could result in unintentional delays in access to care and jeopardizes continued receipt of federal financial participation for behavioral health treatment.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom