

My name is Megan VanEtten.

I am the mother to two beautiful boys. Our youngest son Alden was diagnosed with severe non-verbal autism shortly before his 2nd birthday. As the parent of a child with special needs, particularly a non-verbal child, my greatest fear has always been that my child would be taken advantage of or abused and have no way to defend himself or ask for help.

In 2018 my worst fear came true. Alden had been receiving ABA therapy for 2 years on August 8th, 2018 when I received a text message from the registered behavior technician that had worked with him the previous day explaining to me that she had been sent home after video footage review showed she had "popped" our son in the mouth because he was "in a screaming mood".

We immediately went to remove our son from the center and demanded to see the footage that had been captured of our son's abuse. Eventually we were shown video footage of the RBT raising her fist and our son cowering in his chair. This could not have been the first time he had been assaulted by her. Through the length of the footage we saw her scream at our son and smack him in the mouth and face. We left that office and immediately went to the police station to file a

report. After a lot of questions and digging, all footage was pulled from the facility and it was found that 3 RBTs had been captured on footage abusing 4 children.

We had unknowingly delivered our children to their abusers each day because they had no way to tell us what was going on. Our prosecutor was met with very broken parents full of questions she was unfortunately unable to answer. How would our children not receive the justice they deserved? Why would the women who preyed on our vulnerable children be charged with little more than someone who engaged in a bar fight? We vowed right then and there that no other family should suffer an injustice like this.

We are so thankful Representative Kahle met with us within a month of this terrible event to hear our pleas and continued to work now even years later to make the necessary change to better protect our vulnerable children from being the perfect victims.