



March 14, 2013

The Honorable Laurie Monnes-Anderson
Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
900 Court St. NE, S-413
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Monnes-Anderson,

On behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW Oregon), and the over 1800 social workers we represent, I am writing to express our opposition to SB 302. This legislation would consolidate the State Board of Licensed Social Workers with other health licensing boards, such as psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, naturopathic, chiropractor and counselors into one licensing Board, operated under the Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA).

NASW Oregon supports our current oversight and maintaining a separate social work licensing board. The mission of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers is to protect the citizens of Oregon through the licensing and regulation of social workers. The Board sets policy, establishes standards of practice and ethical conduct, sets standards for certification and licensure, and monitors continuing education requirements and disciplined licensees to safeguard the public. We appreciate the difficult task of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers. It is evident that our Board has performed very well as our profession has rapidly expanded in Oregon within the past several months.

It is important to realize that the breadth of the social work profession goes beyond mental health care services. Social workers work in a broad range of settings, including prisons, schools, assisted living facilities, homes, crisis shelters, soup kitchens, insurance offices, government offices, etc. dealing with complex situations. Social workers perform functions in administration, child welfare, community organizing, medical, case management, prevention, education, and more. Due to the wide scope of practice and complexity of our profession, we feel that oversight, those who are making critical decisions, need to have the background and expertise in our field. It would prove detrimental if those with limited knowledge of the social work profession fill this roll. For these reasons and more, we do not support the consolidation of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers with other licensing boards.

While we support efforts to enhance accountability and cost-effectiveness, it is in the best interests of our members and the general public to keep the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers as an autonomous Board.

Sincerely,

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