



TO: Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

FR: Wendy Curtis MA LPC, COPACT Secretary

DA: February 24, 2015

RE: Support for SB 430

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

The Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (COPACT) represents Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) across Oregon. **I am writing today as the Secretary of COPACT in support of SB 430, which will authorize the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists to withhold license to practice from any applicant who has been convicted of a sex crime.**

LPCs and LMFTs are highly trained Masters level mental health providers who offer psychotherapy services to individuals of all ages, families, couples, groups, and organizations throughout Oregon in mental health clinics, private practices, colleges, hospitals, prisons, and rehabilitation agencies.

It is essential to the safety of those in Oregon seeking mental health care, that all licensed providers are screened to ensure that they have no history of sexual offenses in Oregon or any other states. Now that criminal background checks are a required part of the licensure process, there is no extra work added to licensure boards to seek out additional information about an applicant for a license.

COPACT has learned that some persons living in other states, who were convicted of sex offenses there, have moved to Oregon and have been able to obtain licenses to provide mental health services, only to reoffend here in Oregon with their new clients.

SB 430 will help keep Oregonians safe from predatory sex offenders hiding as mental health providers. COPACT urges you to support SB 430.

Thank you.