



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

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TESTIMONY – HB 2394

The Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers is a health regulatory agency authorized to license and monitor individuals who practice social work in Oregon. With its focus on consumer protection, the BLSW ensures that Oregon social workers have met educational and experiential requirements and practice within the legal and ethical guidelines established in statute and by the board in rule.

The Board of Licensed Social Workers is neutral on HB 2394. That said, the board would like to identify a potential issue regarding Sec. 4 of the bill.

House Bill 2394 would revise the “impaired professional” program for monitoring licensees who have been convicted of certain drug- and alcohol-related offenses. Among the amendments proposed in the bill, Section 1. would delete subsection (3) of ORS 676.185 that defines the term “impaired professional.” Further, Section 4. of the bill would delete the phrase “is or may be an impaired professional as defined in ORS 676.185” from ORS 675.583(1). This language provides statutory authority for the BLSW to require licensees to report to the board any information that a fellow licensee may be an “impaired professional.”

Deleting this statutory reference as set out in Sec. 4 of HB 2394 could result in eliminating or limiting the requirement that social workers licensed by the BLSW report information regarding a co-worker’s or professional colleague’s possible impairment. Based on the plain language of the other language of the bill, it does not appear that this was the intent. It is reasonable to delete the reference in ORS 675.583(1) to a term that would no longer be defined in ORS 676.185. However, it would be possible to correct the reference as well as ensure that the board retains the authority to require licensees to report possible impairment. I would be happy to work with the sponsors if an amendment is necessary.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me at randy.harnisch@state.or.us or by telephone at (503) 508-0636.

Thank you for your consideration,

Randy Harnisch
Executive Director
Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers

