

Elena Balduzzi, Psy.D.
4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd., #622
Portland, OR, 97214
503.232.3646
elenabalduzzipsyd@gmail.com

March 31, 2017

Testimony in Support of HB 2633

Chair Barker, Vice Chair Williamson and Olson, and Members of the Committee on the House Judiciary;

My name is Elena Balduzzi. I am a psychologist licensed in Oregon and a Certified Sex Offender Therapist (CSOT) under the Sex Offender Treatment Board (SOTB). I am also a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for the Oregon Health Licensing Office which oversees the SOTB. In my career, I have worked with juvenile sex abusers; “sexually dangerous” offenders; mentally disordered and developmentally disabled sexual abusers (found Guilty Except for Insanity), and criminal defendants facing sex offense allegations. In all, I have over 25 years of clinical experience in the treatment and assessment of sexual abusers.

As a SME, I have reviewed several complaints against CSOTs and assisted in the investigations into the relative merits of the complaints. A number of these complaints could not be processed because the SOTB lacked jurisdiction and CSOTs who had engaged in unethical practices could not be held to account. It is through this work that I became concerned with the unintended consequences of the origin bill creating the SOTB (HB 3233) and decided to get involved in the effort to propose a remedy. I believe HB 2633 is that remedy.

First, by changing the definition from “sexual offenders” to “sexual abusers,” SOTB jurisdiction would expand to include non-adjudicated individuals, and thereby, would confer consumer protections to *any* person who has sexually abused or has been accused of sexual abuse. Second, by creating a practice act that requires all CSOTs to be licensed in a mental health discipline, all assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues that otherwise fall outside the narrow confines of sex offense-specific treatment would be regulated under those Boards regulate the practices of counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

By passing this legislation, the SOTB would be given authority to regulate all mental health practitioners in Oregon who choose to provide sex offense-specific treatment to sexual abusers. Creation of a practice act would ensure that all sexual abusers receive treatment from individuals who have met minimum qualifications that demonstrate competence in sex offense-specific treatment and evaluation and would compel those wishing to serve this population to attend continuing education in our specialized field. Finally, passage of a law requiring licensure in counseling, social work or psychology would ensure that all certified sex offender therapists meet minimum qualifications across all of the mental health interventions they deliver, not just those addressing sex offense-specific risk factors.

It is time to make sure that all adult and youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior receive treatment from qualified practitioners only. I respectfully urge you to support this bill.

