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RE: HB2633

To: All Interested Parties

I am writing in support of HB2633 which would ensure that sex offender specific treatment is provided by professionals who are appropriately trained and supervised in working with this population. As a Licensed Psychologist who has worked with this population for over two decades, I believe that it is necessary to have both specialty training and experience in dealing with individuals who have committed sexual offenses. There are nuances of assessment and intervention that are different than those we see in a more general mental health setting and without a knowledge of such, the primary issues related to reducing risk and assuring community safety are most likely missed.

I have been witness to numerous cases where a man who committed an offense was initially treated by a mental health professional who was skilled in the treatment of emotional and mental disorders, but had no understanding of the dynamics and treatment needs of an offending individual. Subsequently, the client's mental health issues were addressed without mention or discussion of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors specific to the dynamics of the person's offending behavior. Just last week I was referred a case from another state, where the client was assessed and treated by a psychologist without sex offender specific experience. He had undergone assessment and was being treated for his stress and anxiety concurrent with his legal difficulties. Although these were targets worthy of intervention, he had not addressed any of the factors that led to and maintained his offending behaviors--which had spanned over a year. When he presented to my office, he blamed the victim for his offense, minimized the impact of his offending behavior, had no understanding of grooming (how he set up the offending for several years prior to acting out) and the thought process that contributed to his offending behaviors. It did both he and the community a disservice by his having been treated ineffectively and possibly unethically as the psychologist had no expertise in the area of sex offender treatment. He had clearly addressed issues of stress, but had no increased understanding of the dynamics of his offending, had not taken responsibility for his offense and had not developed any intervention strategies to reduce the probability of re-offending.

I believe that HB 2633 would prevent such scenarios in the State of Oregon by ensuring there is a focus on training and supervision for practitioners providing services for this population. In doing so, we will be enhancing public safety by both reducing recidivism and assisting offender in creating healthy and adaptive lives. I believe the regulation provided by HB 2633 would

create a standard that would benefit all involved and ensure consistency in services provided to the sexual offenders in our state. Please feel free to contact me at either tbrewer@sunsetpcs.net or my office phone of 503-292-1885 if necessary.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Brewer, Psy. D.
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Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider, States of Oregon & Washington
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