

Testimony for SB 255/HB 2432  
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My name is Cherylynn Moser and I am a graduate student at Marylhurst University in the Art Therapy Counseling master's program. My planned graduation is June 2018. I write this letter in support of licensure of art therapists and the current legislation SB255, formerly known as HB2432.

My undergraduate degree, also from Marylhurst University, is in Interdisciplinary Studies, Preparatory Art Therapy. In addition to the myriad of general required coursework for my bachelor's degree, I also was required to take 27 credit hours of studio art, 18 hours of psychology and 5 hours of art therapy experiential courses. These courses were minimum prerequisite hours for admission into the graduate program, not sufficient training to allow me to work as an art therapist.

Through the rigorous training, I have endured during the past two years of graduate school, I have come to understand the very subtle nuances between different art media, how they trigger different responses in individuals, how to observe and document the artmaking process and product. It is important to note that I did not say how to interpret a client's art product, a key misunderstanding about the function of art therapists. My training will allow me to work WITH clients in helping them to understand what their art is saying to and about them, not what I think it is saying.

I have been fortunate through my fieldwork experience at Marylhurst to work with individuals who have been found guilty of crimes due to mental illness. I teach artmaking techniques and make art in both individual and group settings. I do not do art therapy with them. Although I am two years into my graduate program, I am not an art therapist. Next year, during my final year, I will be closely supervised by an onsite supervisor and overseen by my Marylhurst advisor as I begin to practice art therapy with clients. Even after graduation from the program I will continue to need supervision and mentorship to better my skills.

The field of art therapy is more than teaching art or using art in a clinical setting. It is about knowing what materials to use to elicit responses from clients; what materials and techniques to use when a client is regressing or, alternatively, "stuck". It is about knowing when verbal therapy is appropriate and when making art is a better fit. It also requires knowing the properties of the different art mediums to help assist your client in successful artmaking and knowing how a medium will fail and how to use that failure as a therapeutic tool. Art therapy requires knowledge of not only biological, psychological and social development, it also requires knowledge of graphic development and how they are all interrelated. In essence, art therapy is an interdisciplinary profession and one that requires specialized training not mastered through a generalized bachelor's degree program.

This letter was not written to justify my graduate degree but rather as a plea for the myriads of individuals who can be harmed by receiving "art therapy" from those unqualified to do so and for all those individuals who can find better mental health and coping skills through receiving proper art therapy from a licensed and trained professional.

Thank you.