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To: Sen.KathleenTaylor@oregonlegislature.gov, sandy.thielecirka@oregonlegislature.gov,
jessica.wangler@oregonlegislature.gov

Subject: HB2303

Hi, my name is Charles Arbuckle, and I am a constituent of Senator/Representative Kathleen Taylor. I am writing regarding proposed Senate Amendment 3 by Sen. Steiner Hayward to HB 2303.

Health and Wellness Coaches in Oregon are strongly opposed to Amendment 3, which would require the development new of occupational regulations, state requirements, fees and mandatory registration for our occupation.

Health and Wellness Coaches are not "alternative behavioral health practitioners" as characterized in Amendment 3, but peer supporters who provide general wellness and nutrition information; options, recommendations, guidance, motivation, and skill-building to establish healthier lifestyle routine that are client driven.

By categorizing Life Coaches, and Wellness Coaches as "alternative behavioral health practitioners", this amendment will limit who can be Health and Wellness Coaches in the state of Oregon. No other state or nation places this type of restriction on Health and Wellness Coaches or classifies coaches as alternative behavioral health practitioners.

At a recent Senate Committee on Health Care meeting, supporters of Amendment 3 noted multiple times; the amendment is just a simple 'registration' bill, I strongly disagree. Amendment 3 creates a new occupational regulation regime. The text of the amendment grants new authority to the Oregon Health Licensing Office to develop regulations that define qualifications to practice (page 2, line 27), practice standards (page 2, line 30), and associated "fines or other penalties" for violations of those practice standards (page 2, line 20).

Currently, Oregon's occupational licensing and restrictions rank the state 6th most burdensome in the country(1). New, sweeping regulations that were hastily introduced to the public without stakeholder input will put additional state mandated burdens on coach practitioners, discourage innovation and may cause coaches to leave the state entirely.

Additionally, the regulation of who can speak about diet, lifestyle and wellness raises profound First Amendment concerns regarding the rights of individuals. Enacting such provisions found in Amendment 3, invite First Amendment lawsuits.

Coaches support personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific and actionable outcomes. It is distinct from psychotherapy and other behavioral health interventions. Classifying privately certified Health and Wellness Coaches as health care practitioners would contradict the definition of coaching and be detrimental to coaches, their clients and the state.

Please oppose Senate Amendment 3 to HB 2303.

Sincerely,

Charles Arbuckle

(1) States Ranked by Average Burden of Licensing Requirements, Institute for Justice.