

February 3, 2020

To Whom It Concerns,

I understand that **HB4031** proposes to remove the exemption clause—**ORS 675.825(4)(a)**— that authorizes myself, and many colleagues I know, to practice legally in Oregon. Not only do I practice under this umbrella, but I have utilized the services of many practitioners who also legally practice within the scope of this statute. It is important, as a consumer and provider, that the practice of alternative therapies in Oregon continue to be an option of choice. I care greatly about consumer protection and advocate for the implementation of a fair plan that creates more jurisdiction over unlicensed/alternative practitioners.

I strongly oppose the removal of the ORS 675.825(4)(a) exemption, it must be maintained. Currently written, HB4031 does not address ethical/professional errors, which are necessary for holding alternative professionals accountable and to protect the public. While most transgressions committed by state-licensed therapists are of an ethical nature and don't rise to criminal prosecution, one expects similar observances with alternative practitioners. Therefore, instead of completely removing the exemption, which has been a viable path for both practitioners and consumers, putting in effect appropriate protective plans is the next (and overdue) reasonable solution.

Vermont has diligently and safely utilized a secure registry to address consumer protection and ethical standards for alternative practitioners. I strongly favor the implementation of a similar registry or board in Oregon for oversight, that will ensure solid consumer protection while continuing to be a progressive state that allows consumers and practitioners to have the options of choice they prefer. I would be glad to register and pay for the implementation of an alternative registry.

I have been practicing as an alternative counselor in Oregon, legally, for the past five years. I have thousands of hours of training in the counseling field, as well as many hours in adjunct fields. I have and continue to attend countless workshops and trainings, participate in regular supervision, am an active program assistant in the training of other therapists, and read widely about issues and concerns in the field. I have been and continue to be vigilant in knowing what I am trained to do and what is beyond my scope. I have a very clear disclosure form that all clients read and sign. I practice using the highest standards of ethics. I do not use initials or words to describe myself that are inaccurate.

I ask you to consider those of us who do our work with great care and professionalism. In fact, to thrive as an unlicensed practitioner only available for self-pay, I have to do an outstanding job. Most people have insurance and want to use it. The fact that I have a long wait list and I turn away, on average, five clients weekly because I have a full schedule, demonstrates my professionalism and integrity. While there undoubtedly are people who call themselves counselors who have minimal training and questionable ethics, please do not discount those of us who have poured our hearts and souls into what we do, and who adhere to principles not unlike your own.

I ask you to consider everyone in your process. I belong to a group of people, many of whom are probably unaware of the proposed changes and who don't have a good avenue to contribute their perspective and needs.

Thank you for your consideration. Feel free to reach me at michelleglassifs@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Michelle Glass