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## **SPECIAL TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB 2117**

### **EGREGIOUSLY UNETHICAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESSING ON THE PART OF THE MENTAL HEALTH REGULATORY AGENCY (MHRA) & THE OREGON BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY**

#### **Part I: Fact Set B About Psychologist Associates in Oregon & Across the U.S. & Canada**

To: The Honorable Senator Sara Gelser, Chair of the Oregon Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery;

Date: May 3, 2021

From: Christian Wolff, MA, Oregon Licensed Psychologist Associate (Inactive)/ Executive Co-Director of Healthcare Alliance for Regulatory Board Reform

#### **Position on HB 2117: Against**

My apologies for any redundant material.

However, I must repeat the first item from my Fact Set A as an introduction.

**1) Oregon Licensed Psychologist Associates do not want their license-type sunsetted.** We made this abundantly clear to the Oregon Board of Psychology (OBOP)\* in 2008 when the board proposed our sunsetting as an Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR). We asked them instead, to "get their shoulder behind the wheel" and lift us UP. The support from Psychologist Associates & Psychologists (doctoral level) alike was overwhelming OPPOSED to the sunsetting of our license-type. OBOP. In 2014, OBOP again tried to create a OAR which would sunset the Psychologist Associate license-type. Again, we Psychologist Associates made it abundantly clear that we OPPOSED the sunsetting of our license-type and that we wanted, again, for OBOP to get their "shoulder behind the wheel" to lift us UP instead. Now, OBOP is proposing this as a bill before the legislature as HB 2117. They alerted NO one of this legislative action.

#### **2) APA stands for the American Psychological Association.**

ASPPB stands for the Association of State and Provincial Regulatory Boards.

Charles Hill, Executive Director for OBOP/MHRA & LaReé Felton, Policy Advisor for OBOP/MHRA as well as the entire Board of OBOP directors know these regulatory organizations intimately. OBOP is in VERY close relation these organizations. Anything OBOP would want to know from these regulatory organizations is just a phone call, an email, or a familiar Google search away for OBOP.

3) **According to APA, July 24, 2018:** “The American Psychological Association has appointed a task force to develop a blueprint for the association to accredit master’s programs in health service psychology.” The APA-site article goes on to report:

“Given the increasing number of states that are licensing psychology providers at the master’s level, the association decided it makes sense for APA to create a roadmap to add master’s programs to its accreditation portfolio,” said James Lichtenberg, PhD, professor emeritus in counseling psychology at the University of Kansas. “APA has long been the recognized leader in accrediting doctoral programs in psychology, so it makes sense for the association to apply its expertise to master’s-level programs.”

I encourage the Senate Committee to view the article for themselves at: <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2018/07/accrediting-masters-programs>.

4) In her testimony before the House Committee on Behavior Health on February 3, 2021, **LaReé Felton told Representative Moore Greene that “there are only a few other states that have Psychologist Associate licenses.** Ms. Felton added that she *“couldn’t think of what they are.”*

**To help Ms. Felton remember what those “only few” states are of which she could not recall ANY during her oral testimony I will provide a list here.**

Online Psychology Degrees answers the question, “In What States Can I Be Licensed With A Master’s Degree?” They report:

Alabama – Psychological Technician

Alaska – Licensed Psychological Associate

Arkansas – Psychological Examiner

California – Registered Psychological Assistant

Kentucky – Licensed Psychological Practitioner or  
Licensed Psychological Associate

Maine – Psychological Examiner

Michigan – Masters Limited License

Nebraska – Psychological Assistant

New Mexico – Psychologist Associate – Supervised

Ohio – School Psychologist

Oregon – Psychologist Associate – Supervised or  
Independent

Texas – Licensed Specialist in School Psychology or  
Licensed Psychological Associate

Vermont – Psychologist- Master

Virginia – School Psychologist

West Virginia – Psychologist, School Psychologist or  
School Psychologist Independent Practice

Prefacing this list, the page states:

Below is a list of all licensing options in each state that allows master's level licensure in psychology. **It is the responsibility of the state to set forth mandates on what training is necessary for a professional to practice psychology, as well as what limitations are placed at each licensing level.** Each psychological professional must

become familiar with what capabilities their license affords them, as well as possible limitations to the scope of practice.

**RISING:** After the list, this page states the following: While some states limit psychological practice to those with a doctoral level degree, a **rising** number of states are allowing master's level practitioners to secure their license and practice psychology.

The date on this Online Psychology Degrees page is uncertain. It is likely 2018, but their assertion that Psychologist Associates licenses are on the rise is supported by ASPPB's statement that estimates HALF of all states and (Canadian) provinces license Psychologist Associates. See below.

I encourage the Senate Committee to read this page for themselves at: <https://www.online-psychology-degrees.org/faq/in-what-states-can-i-be-licensed-with-a-masters-degree/>

5) **From the Texas Board of Examiners of Psychology (TBEP)** and the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (TBHEC), under Applying for a License, on a current page, TBEP writes:

The Council issues three types of licenses for the **practice of psychology:**

- Licensed Psychologist
- **Licensed Psychological Associate**
- Licensed Specialist in School Psychology

I encourage the Senate Committee to view this article for themselves at: <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2018/07/accrediting-masters-programs>

**I draw special attention to the words “practice of psychology” for two reasons.** 1) OBOP seems to believe that only Doctoral Level psychologists “practice psychology.” 2) Practicing PSYCHOLOGY is distinct from practicing COUNSELING, MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPY, AND CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK.

OBOP brought erroneous charges against me personally in 2013, for claiming to “practice psychology” as a Psychologist Associate. Try as I might, OBOP would not or could not tell me what it is that a Psychologist Associate DOES practice. Their best effort was to point out an OAR which states that Psychologists Associates, “practice certain psychological practices within the practice of psychology (paraphrased),” WITHOUT stating what those “certain” practices are or are not. TO THIS DAY (since the OBOP charges against me), I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS A PSYCHOLOGIST ASSOCIATE PRACTICES IN OREGON, and neither, I believe, do any other persons or organizations anywhere.

We MIGHT know, if we had supervisors who could tailor for their licensees, areas of

competency. But to the best of my knowledge, there exists only one current Oregon Licensed Psychologist who is still under the first three years of licensure which requires supervision. ALL BUT ONE CURRENT OREGON PSYCHOLOGIST ASSOCIATE practices INDEPENDENTLY & WITHOUT SUPERVISION. Therefore, most of us do not have a supervisor to put any limitations on our independent practices.

At least two past OBOP Board Chairs have assured me that there are no restrictions on the psychology practices of INDEPENDENTLY licensed Psychologist Associates. These ex-Chairs are Martin Wachter and Debra Orman-Hughes.

**The point relevant here is that this may be one of the reasons so few MASTER'S PREPARED PSYCHOLOGISTS apply for licensure in Oregon** - that the privileges afforded them in Oregon are so ill-defined, or perhaps better said, obfuscated. I have asked OBOP countless times to make all this more clear. They have refused.

6) **Continuing with Texas for a moment**, under Applying for a License, the TBEP shows that their procedure is quite similar to Oregon's. It reads:

Licensed Psychological Associate

The requirements for obtaining licensure as a psychologist are set forth in 22 TAC 463.10. Generally, these requirements include:

- a graduate degree in psychology, consisting of at least sixty (60) semester credit hours, with no more than twelve (12) hours of practicum, internship, or structured experience counted toward the total degree hour requirement. NOTE: A graduate degree consisting of 42 semester credit hours, with at least 27 hours in psychology will be accepted for licensure purposes through August 31, 2021, so long as the applicant began his or her graduate program leading to the degree before August 31, 2019;
- Six (6) semester credit hours of practicum, internship, or other structured experience within the graduate degree program, while under the supervision of a licensed psychologist;
- passage of the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology; and
- passage of the Jurisprudence Examination.

The following are requirements for independent practice authority for licensed psychological associates:

- A minimum of 3,000 hours of post-graduate degree supervised experience obtained within 24-48 consecutive months, and in not more than three placements; and
- Application for independent practice authority to the Board.

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Last updated February 8, 2021, the Texas Department of State Health Services through Texas Health and Human Services reports that:

## There are 803 practicing Psychologists Associates in Texas (practicing psychology specifically and clearly).

I encourage the Senate Committee to view this for themselves at: <https://dshs.texas.gov/chs/hprc/tables/2020/LPA20.aspx>

7) Not long ago, the generic term across states for a Psychologist Associate was “Master’s Level Psychologist.” Indications from APA, ASPPB are that the new generic term is “Psychologist Associate” - just as used in Oregon.

The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Board (ASPPB) which issues the very National Exam which all Psychologists and Psychologist Associates alike must pass with equal scores (Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology - EPPP) has a VERY interesting and INTERACTIVE site online called: ASPPB PSYIBook: Psychology Licensing Requirements. Here they help readers to find the licensing requirements by state for 4 types of professionals. Specifically, they are:

Psychologist  
School Psychologist  
Behavior Analyst  
**Psychological Associate**

I encourage the Senate Committee to look at this site themselves at: <http://psybook.asppb.org/>

8) ASPPB provides a page on their site called Requirements to Practice. Under “Education,” it reads in part:

## Licensure for the independent practice of psychology requires a doctoral degree in psychology in **most** states, provinces, and

territories of the U.S. and Canada.

**About half the states, provinces and territories also have a category of licensure for the practice of psychology under the supervision of a doctoral level licensed psychologist, often called Psychological Associate, which usually requires at least a master's degree in psychology.**

There is a side-bar on this page called FAQs & Latest News. The most recent article listed in this side-bar is date 1/27/2021, so I am assuming the main content on this page is current as of 1/27/2021

I encourage the Senate Committee to view this page for themselves at: <https://www.asppb.net/page/ReqPsych>

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The hour is getting late and the Senate Committee Hearing in about 2 1/2 hours.

I have more facts to share on matters relevant to this bill and I will be submitting the within the next 24 hours.

I respectfully ask that the Committee read all materials prior to their Work Session scheduled for May 6, 2021.

Please DO NOT pass HB 2117 out of committee.

In the very least, due to OBOPs failure to notify licensees, other psychologist associates, the public, and all interested parties of this bills existence and movement through the legislature, table the matter until Oregon Legislative session 2022.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

**Christian Wolff, MA**

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