

Dear Members of Behavioral Health Committee:

I am concerned about House Bill 2493. This bill excluded stakeholders in the making and gives regulatory powers to an agency that governs a different set of occupations. Alternative Practitioners function differently with different skill sets and do not practice mental health and medicine. This bill has a proposed effect on my community and my clients.

A major problem with this bill is that it limits people's options and the right to choose Practitioners of their choice. Most of our clients want to select the type of Practitioner they prefer and do not want the stigma of being diagnosed and labeled.

Like you, I care about the welfare of Oregonians and safe practices of alternative practitioners. I care about integrity and professional skill sets to serve my clients. This is why my education covers decades of study in techniques and acquiring skills, processes, and experience so I can work and serve Oregonians well.

Most practitioners are committed and have invested their personal resources - money and time - in training and continuing education to maintain their certifications and then creating and maintaining a business.

Think about worship. The reason people are allowed so many choices in ways to worship is because everybody has the right to worship in whatever way they feel is best for them. We are allowed the right to talk to others and be with others who have the same values. Values in this case would be for choice of practitioners. Rather than recreating the wheel with HB2493, there's already a more practical solution that has been adopted by eleven states: the Safe Harbor law. There is already a Legislative Concept written and ready for Oregon LC3591.

Safe Harbor provides the standards that Alternative Practitioners need to stay within and includes disclosures on training and experience. If a practitioner violates these standards, then there is legal recourse with laws that are already in place.

As the Behavioral Health Committee and workgroup reviews this bill, I respectfully ask that consideration is made of the stakeholders involved in this or any other such bill affecting the complementary and alternative community.

In Summary, some concerns about HB2493 are:

1. Limiting the people's right to choose their Practitioners of choice.
2. This bill would put many Oregon Alternative Practitioners and providers out of work, unable to support themselves and families in difficult times.
3. Complementary and alternative providers don't practice medicine or mental health counseling and should not be regulated in the same way as medical and professional boards regulate mental counseling.
4. Too many professions with different skills sets that have no relationship with each other have been lumped together in one vague category.
5. Safe Harbor is already written and effective in 11 other states.

As an Oregonian with a coaching, hypnotherapy, and training business I rely on the income that this bill would adversely affect. My clientele would suffer, too.

A safe community is built on integrity, communication, and respect.

I appreciate the Oregon legislature for working during these challenging times.

Let's work together and make Oregon a Safe Harbor state to support Alternative Practitioners and Oregonian's right to choose.
Thank you.
Respectfully,

Cat Wilson

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PS. I am on a steering committee made up of various alternative and complementary practitioners and would be happy to be involved in passage of Safe Harbor legislation LC3591 for Oregon.