

I have been a successful alternative counselor in Oregon for 30 years. I invested 1000's of hours in my training, although I choose not to follow the licensure route. It has been legal in Oregon to do so this entire time. I have been working with other professionals since 2008 to create a bill that forms a registry for alternative practitioners - a bill that is fair to counselors like myself, to those who are licensed and to the general public. I support HB 2493 because it does all 3 of these things.

HB 2493 acknowledges the wide range of services clients access in our state and was carefully created by a work group that represented many stakeholders. Because the quality and duration of the alternative trainings vary widely, as well as a given practitioners experience, HB 2493 helps inform the public more fully. It also provides an official place for clients to turn to, in those unusual instances when they have a complaint, thus providing another level of consumer protection.

Having been involved in the process of creating a registry for 13 years, I believe many alternate counselors fully support us finally having a more specific umbrella under which to work. However, I understand there are some objections from a number of alternative practitioners who are not trained as counselors, but who do very important work. I sense they have different concerns than I do. It is difficult to craft a bill that is amenable to all concerned.

Many alternative providers with diverse backgrounds already provide disclosure statements, are part of organizations with high ethical standards in place, and follow the kinds of things this bill provides. So while it adds another organizational layer, I believe it also brings a sense of fairness and oversight to those who are licensed.

Thank you for listening.