

Submitter: Joy Garcia
On Behalf Of: Social Workers
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4083

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Re: HB 4083 Requiring the Oregon Health Authority adopt a uniform process for credentialing organizational behavioral health providers and establish a centralized portal for processing applications.

Dear House Committee on Behavioral Health,
I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Oregon and I am also credentialed to supervise Social Workers in the process of getting their licenses, currently with three supervisees I oversee.

I am writing to oppose HB 4083 which would merge all of our different regulatory bodies for credentials and licensures under one board. Although Social Workers, Psychologists, Marriage and Family therapists, and Licensed professional counselors have some similarities, our professions also have significant differences. Social work training and practice as well as our code of ethics has some differences to the other listed credentials that are important to the entire identity and underpinnings of our profession. It is important that Social Workers continue to oversee other Social Workers in their license training. Currently, our laws and rules allow for a licensee to receive up to half of their supervision from a Psychiatrist or Psychologist. HB 4083 would require that Social workers allow other supervisors with other credentials and this risks Social Work in Oregon losing some of the integrity in the differences between our backgrounds.

The model proposed by this bill is one I am familiar with since it is the model used by Washington state where I am also licensed. For Social Workers, this is a disastrous model. Since it is a larger regulatory body, there are not direct social workers to contact, the credentialing process is much longer, messier, and less direct.

Practicing under the Board of Licensed Social Workers in Oregon currently is a relief since guidance is clear, there are quick responses, and credentialing has direct pathways. A new system could create delays, incur expenses for new renewal dates, and otherwise complicate the process for Social Workers. As a final note, reading the other letters of testimony demonstrates a pattern wherein Social Workers are opposed to this bill and other individuals who may not even have Mental Health credentials are the supporters.

In relationship to Social Workers, the concerns HB 4083 is attempting to resolve are already being handled by the Board of Licensed Social Workers in an efficient way that is directly related to our code of ethics and practice. I do not believe this would be preserved if HB 4083 were to be enacted.

Thank you for your consideration,
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