

Submitter: Laura Ivy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4083

My name is Laura and I have held a clinical license in social work in the state of Oregon for well over a decade. I stand firmly opposed to this change. I specifically chose the profession of social work due to the foundation of training in systems theory, rich history in advocacy at the interpersonal, organizational, and systemic levels that is unique to the profession. Since becoming licensed I have supervised both social work and professional counseling students and can personally attest to the difference lenses through which we are trained. The NASW code of ethics is a unique guide for a specific profession that demands that as professionals we focus not only on service to our communities, but that we “pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals”. We are living in a time of horrific oppression within our home communities. To dilute a profession with clear ethical guidelines to challenge this is unwise at best.

Additionally, licensed social workers provide behavioral health care and also work in MANY varying roles in our communities. Our training prepares us to work as advocates, case managers, policy analysts, community organizers, therapists, etc. We maintain clinical licenses within this wide range of diverse settings. I am concerned about a newly graduated social worker being supervised by a professional whose educational path or experience does not attend to this reality. Section 5.01 of the NASW code of ethics demands that social workers work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice within our field. I question how we will be able to focus on this ethic principle without support and training within our profession.

Lastly, social workers provide the majority of behavioral health care in the USA. Many Oregon social workers may want to live or become licensed in multiple states. I am concerned about how this may create barriers for social workers to be able to find states that honor license reciprocity which could ultimately impact the educational social work programs in the state, dissuade Oregonians from seeking the profession and remaining in Oregon to practice, and reducing access to vital care for Oregon residents.