

Submitter: Natalee Stanton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4083

As an individual currently working within medical mental health and pursuing my Licensed Clinical Social Worker credentials, I oppose this proposed bill due to the barriers that it will present to the mental health industry. Currently to become a LCSW, individuals must complete a Master's in Social Work program which in itself requires a substantial amount of money to enter a profession that is well known for not compensating adequately for providers. After completing said program, individuals must complete the Oregon Rules and Laws exam to demonstrate competency and ethical standards. After completion, individuals are credited as Certified Social Work Associate (which can often take months for approval and requires annual renewals) they then have to work a minimum of 24 months obtaining 3,500 total working hours; 2,000 of which need to be direct client hours, under supervision of a LCSW in careers that are known for burnout, under compensation, poor work-life boundaries, and understaffed. It is not guaranteed that clinical supervision will be provided or funded by your agencies and individuals must pay out of pocket to meet the minimum requirement of 2 supervision hours a month. Currently, I am paying \$300 out of pocket for supervision on top of paying for student loans for my education from an accredited university. Once obtaining all the required hours, CSWAs take the ASWB clinical exam which requires preparation and money. The ASWB clinical exam already evaluates the knowledge, ethical standards, and clinical judgements of CSWAs. Upon completion of the process, LCSWs must complete continuing education requirements and license renewals to maintain credentials. These processes are important because working within social work requires working with vulnerable individuals which demands competent professionals but requiring additional supervision will present more barriers and additional stress. The profession of mental health is already struggling to employ qualified and ethical individuals and implementing additional requirements will only further the gap in services to the communities of Oregon.