

Submitter: Maria Makowski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4083

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 4083.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with more than 20 years of experience in the mental health field, including work as a clinician, leader, and registered supervisor. My professional background includes community mental health, crisis services, inpatient perinatal clinical leadership, and now Clinical Director of a state-credentialed outpatient mental health clinic. I am also a registered supervisor with both the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers (OBLSW) and the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (OBLPCT).

HB 4083 proposes two changes that I adamantly oppose:

1. The merger of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers into the Mental Health Regulatory Agency, and
2. Allowing Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) to supervise social workers.

1a. Eliminating the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers jeopardizes professional standards and public protection

Social work is not an extension of another mental health discipline — it is a standalone, highly regulated profession with its own rigorous educational foundation, codified ethical framework, and clearly defined scope of practice. Unlike professions that focus primarily on individual pathology or treatment models, social work is grounded in a person-in-environment framework that requires practitioners to evaluate individuals within the context of families, communities, institutions, and public systems.

Social workers are trained to integrate systems theory, advocacy, social policy, equity, and social justice into clinical and professional decision-making. These competencies are not supplemental or theoretical — they are foundational to how social workers assess risk, protect client welfare, navigate complex systems, and deliver ethical, culturally responsive care. Removing social work from its own independent regulatory structure fundamentally undermines these standards and weakens public protection.

Merging the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers into the Mental Health Regulatory Agency risks dismantling the profession's specialized oversight, ethics enforcement, and professional accountability. Social work extends far beyond psychotherapy. Many licensed social workers practice in hospitals, emergency departments, crisis response systems, schools, child welfare, housing and homelessness services, and community-based settings. I have personally practiced in many of these roles throughout my career.

There is no practical or ethical way to consolidate the full scope of social work into a regulatory framework designed solely for mental health treatment without erasing critical aspects of the profession and diminishing the quality of care provided across systems.

2b. Allowing LPCs and LMFTs to supervise social workers undermines training, ethics, and professional identity

Supervision in social work is not limited to clinical oversight. It is the primary setting in which social workers develop professional identity, ethical reasoning, and a deep understanding of the social work lens. Supervision is where emerging social workers learn to apply systems thinking, advocacy, equity, and ethical decision-making to real-world practice.

LPCs and LMFTs are skilled and valuable professionals; however, their education, scope of practice, and ethical frameworks are distinct from those of social workers. Effective supervision of social work students and associates requires a comprehensive understanding of social work history, values, ethics, scope of practice, and role across diverse systems. Without this foundation, supervision cannot adequately prepare social workers for ethical, competent, and independent practice.

Permitting cross-disciplinary supervision in said manner risks diluting professional standards, creating confusion around ethical accountability, and weakening the integrity of social work profession.