

*Testimony submitted by email*

Dear House Committee on Health Care member Jessica DeFelice,

I'm writing to you today regarding HB2361 which I understand your committee will soon consider. HB2361 unnecessarily and unfairly discriminates against Alternative Therapists in Oregon and would put hundreds of alternative therapists out of work. I'm asking that you reject HB2361 and not move it out of committee.

I see HB2361 as a bad bill because of the following:

- HB2361 would put hundreds of alternative therapists out of work for no good reason. While putting honest, ethical therapists out of work, HB2361 doesn't actually address consumer protection.
- Thousands of Oregonians engage services from alternative therapists and they would be left without the therapy resources that they prefer to use.
- By putting alternative therapists out of work, HB2361 creates a restriction in trade, which our state regulatory boards shouldn't be engaging in.
- When alternative therapists and other stakeholders met with the LEW committee (composed of OPLPCT, OBPE, BLSW members) on 4/27/2017 to discuss the legislative proposal that became HB2361, Larry Conner (COPACT government relations chair) pointed out to the LEW that this change does little or nothing to improve consumer safety and instead focuses on punishing ethical practitioners by taking away their livelihoods and businesses.
- When alternative therapists and other stakeholders met with the LEW committee on 4/27/2016, an alternative therapist presented to the LEW committee an alternative plan that will provide for real and effective consumer protection. This plan is based on a model that is functioning well in Vermont and was met with a positive reception at that time. If a change is to be made, Oregon should move toward a more inclusive model like the one that was presented to the LEW committee.

During the past 10 years, licensure boards in Oregon (OBLPCT, OBPE) have made several legislative attempts to push Alternative Therapists out of business in Oregon. All of these past bills have failed for good reason - alternative therapists operate ethically, honestly and legitimately in Oregon. During the 2017 legislative session the OBPE, OPLPCT, and BLSW are again attempting this restriction in trade under the guise of consumer protection and I respectfully request that you stop HB2361.

Sincerely,

John Benassu, MA, LPC