

**Public Health Committee**  
**March 19, 2014**  
**Testimony on SB 471: An Act Concerning Mental and Behavioral**  
**Health Services**  
**Request to Delete and Remove Section 2 (C)**

To the members of the Public Health Committee, let me begin by saying I greatly appreciate your work in the passage of the 2013 provisions strengthening the statute providing for the licensure of Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC). This has been helpful to the consumers of substance abuse services to have a high standard of care provided by full behavioral health/mental health providers equal to those that hold licenses in Social Work, Professional Counseling, and Marriage and Family Therapy – which requires at least a master’s degree in a *behavioral health field*.

I have been working in the substance abuse and mental health field for over 20 years. I have worked with adolescents and adults. I began my career working in the juvenile justice system and with the homeless – which included veterans. During this time frame I have found that the requirements for substance abuse licensure to be very important. The individual should hold a behavioral health degree just like an attorney should hold a law degree.

Members may be aware of the economic cost to the Emergency Rooms, Primary Care Physicians, families, and the Legal Systems. We are talking about roughly 500 billion dollars a year. Now this is worth thinking about. Substance Disorders are very complex, and many people (professionals and other wise) find this area of work to be difficult. Many lack the training and expertise. I think our state deserves the best prepared workforce we have to offer. The standards for the LADC need to be kept as high as possible. Due to the importance of these standards, I ask that you **please remove Section 2 (C) from SB 471**.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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