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**TESTIMONY REGARDING HB-5521
AN ACT REQUIRING LICENSURE OF MASTER'S-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Honorable members of the Public Health Committee,

I am in support of proposed HB-5521, AN ACT REQUIRING LICENSURE OF MASTER'S LEVEL PSYCHOLOGISTS, with minor modifications.

The rationale for licensure is threefold: First, to assure quality service delivery to clients who choose Master's level therapy by holding standards of licensure that must be held to. Second, to make equal with other Master's level behavioral health licensure (LCSW, LPC, LMFT) thereby allowing for parity in work, pay and insurance reimbursement. Third, to keep the educational and professional integrity of the degree and its ethics of practice.

There is some concern from the Connecticut Psychological Association that clients may be confused if they see a Master's level licensed psychologist versus a PhD or PsyD licensed psychologist. This is simply not the case as credentials are placed after the name of the practitioner that would not include a PhD or PsyD. For example, as a Nationally Certified Psychologist (NCP) and a Board Certified Clinical Psychotherapist (BCCP) my credentials are clearly articulated. Licensure as a Master's level Psychologist may be abbreviated as LMP or other term such as Licensed Behavioral Practitioner (LBP) as with other states such as Oklahoma. The point is licensure for those with a Master's degree in Psychology, as the North American Association of Masters Psychologists (NAMPP), the certifying agency of our profession recommends. We simply do not fit the LPC or other licensable clinical specialty. Our education and training does not permit application and licensure under any other title.

Currently there are at least 25 other states that license Master's level psychologists. I have included a copy information pertaining to those state licensures with my written testimony. As you will see, licensure of Master's level Psychologists is a growing trend in mental health service delivery and Connecticut is unfortunately lagging behind. I am hoping that we move forward.

As proposed HB-5521 stands now the language calls for required licensure. A suggested amendment might read to permit licensure rather than require it. This would ascertain that not all persons with Master's degrees in Psychology need licensure if they do not want it. Moreover, if title using the word "Psychologist" be amended to appease concerns by the Connecticut Psychological Association I would be amenable to Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist or similar term allowing licensure of those holding a Master's degree in Psychology and meeting the other criteria in the proposed bill.

Thank you for your time and attention to this pressing matter.

Christopher L. Montes, MA, NCP, FDC, BCCP