

Written Testimony from Trina Wong
Regarding

H.B. No. 6861 - AN ACT CONCERNING MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

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

My name is Trina Wong and I am a graduate student at Fairfield University. I am scheduled to graduate in May with a Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy. I live in Fairfield, CT, and I am an Intern at Fairfield Counseling Services.

I am writing to you today to bring your attention to an important issue for Marriage and Family Therapists (~~aka~~ (‘MFTs’) in Connecticut. I am asking for your support of legislation that would create an “Associate” title for MFTs in Connecticut.

Once I graduate, like most of my fellow alums, I will be looking towards the next step in my career, including finding employment. But that’s not all. I want to ~~continue to better myself become and become licensed~~ re-credentialed as soon as possible. ~~Therefore, I want to work towards licensure.~~

As you may know from other testimonies, in order to become licensed in the State of Connecticut, an MFT graduate must accomplish 2 things in order to become a licensed MFT, or ‘LMFT’. A graduate must 1) pass the National Licensure exam; AND 2) accrue 1,000 direct client contact hours and 100 hours of supervision. The National Licensure exam can be studied for and taken any time after graduation, but the 1,000 direct client contact hours and 100 hours of supervision typically takes 2 years of full-time employment to accomplish.

This second requirement is where a barrier lies. In order to start accruing the direct client contact hours, a new graduate needs to find employment. But this is extremely difficult. Most employers are looking for MFTs who are already licensed. ~~, i.e. LMFTs. And e~~ Even after a graduate has studied for, taken, and passed the rigorous National Licensure exam, ~~since their title of MFT does not change, they are not eligible to become licensed while~~ but employers are still looking for LMFTs, ~~the same barrier still exists~~. I know of ~~MFTs graduates~~ who are struggling with this very barrier today.

As you can see, the dilemma is: MFTs need a job to become licensed, but they can’t get a job without being licensed.

In order to overcome this barrier, HB 6861 would allow for an ‘Associate’ license for MFTs. In other words, the title of LMFTA would be recognized for a graduate who has taken and passed the National Licensure exam. This would help to remove the barrier to MFTs described above.

I urge your support of HB 6861 to create an associate license for MFTs. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Trina Wong