



Testimony of Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly, Connecticut Counseling Association
In opposition to
**HB 6294- An Act Concerning Qualifications for
Licensed Professional Counselors**
Public Health Committee March 4, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly and I am the Connecticut Counseling Association's Public Policy and Legislation Committee Chair.

The Connecticut Counseling Association is the professional association that represents Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs). For the past 88 years, the CCA has supported the profession of counseling and those individuals and families it serves in a variety of clinical settings. Currently, 2218 individuals are licensed as professional counselors, to serve the citizens of Connecticut.

I speak to you today on behalf of the CCA on an issue vital to the integrity of the profession of counseling, H.B. 6294 *An Act Concerning Qualification for Licensed Professional Counselors*.

Currently, the requirements for the LPC are completing 60 graduate semester hours in counseling on specified content areas, achieving a passing score on the National Counselor Examination, and acquiring 3,000 hours of postgraduate-degree-supervised counseling experience. This bill would count graduate internship hours toward the 3,000 hour supervision, thereby decreasing the total number of required postgraduate-degree hours.

We are strongly opposed to H.B. 6294 for the following reasons:

- **Our consumers deserve the best clinical mental healthcare possible.** However reducing minimum supervision hours would allow recent counseling graduates to achieve licensure with considerably less experience than the legislature initially intended when it approved counselor licensure. This would place consumers at heightened risk for harm.
- **A 3,000 hour post-degree supervision period is a basic professional standard for mental health clinicians of all disciplines.** Other independently licensed master's level mental health professionals, such as Licensed Clinical Social Workers, are required to complete this basic 3,000 hour post-degree period of supervised experience prior to licensure. This reduction in required hours of

supervised, post-degree counseling experience would place LPCs out of step with the minimum basic standards for licensure as an independent mental health clinician in our state.

- Consistent with requirements in Connecticut, Licensed Professional Counselors in most other states are required to complete a 3000 hour post-degree period of supervised experience prior to licensure. Reducing the minimum supervised, post-degree counseling hours would also make training requirements for LPCs in Connecticut less stringent than training requirements in other states.

At this time of increasing fiscal and clinical accountability we do not want to set a new national precedent by requiring LESS training for licensed mental health professionals?

We therefore urge maintenance of the basic 3,000 hour requirement for post-degree supervision and would instead propose increases in training requirements, such as coursework in diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders and clinical internship during the master's degree program.

In sum, H.B. 6294 would lower the standards for training Licensed Professional Counselors. As the state professional association that represents Licensed Professional Counselors, we cannot overstate the importance of maintaining this basic 3,000 hour supervision experience. We therefore urge the committee to oppose H.B. 6294. It would be my pleasure to meet with you, should you wish to discuss these points further.

Respectfully,

Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly

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