



## TESTIMONY ON PROPOSED S.B. No. 250

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To Co-Chairpersons of the Public Health Committee, Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter,

My name is Jennifer Sokira, and I am a Board Certified Music Therapist from Monroe, CT. I am the president-elect of the New England Region of the American Music Therapy Association and a member of the Connecticut Music Therapy Task Force. I am the Executive Director of Connecticut Music Therapy Services, LLC, a state-wide private music therapy practice with offices in Watertown, CT, and I am currently a music therapist on staff at the Resiliency Center of Newtown.

I am speaking in favor of Proposed Senate Bill Number 250, An Act Concerning Art Therapy for several reasons.

First, approval of this bill will increase the number of Connecticut art therapy consumers who will be able to access Art Therapy services with qualified professionals and reimbursement for these services.

Second, approval of this bill will provide client and consumer protection. The public is not fully aware that very specific skills, experience and certification are required to ensure that an art therapist is a competent professional. Due to the universal nature of the arts, unqualified individuals at times knowingly or unknowingly falsely represent themselves as art therapists, presenting a risk to clients. For example, when traumatic material arises during the course of creative arts experiences, the client should have the opportunity to safely process this traumatic material with a qualified, trained professional. Unfortunately, this type of misrepresentation, whether an individual is falsely stating that they are an art, music or other creative therapist, can lead to client harm.

Thirdly, this bill would create a license for Art Therapists in Connecticut that utilizes as its basis the established national standards for Art Therapy education, clinical training, supervision and certification. As a fellow discipline within in the creative arts therapies, music therapists feel that this is a solid precedent for licensure in our state. Music Therapists believe that this could lead to additional client access and consumer protection within the music therapy field and within other creative arts therapies in CT in the future.

As a music therapist who has the honor of currently working collaboratively with art therapists on a daily basis at the Resiliency Center of Newtown, I regularly see the quality and effectiveness of their trauma-informed, evidence-based work with children and adults who have been impacted by the 12/14 tragedy at Sandy Hook. These professionals offer their clients a safe, and expressive environment in which to creatively heal, and this is highly valued in the Newtown community.

I urge you to support the recognition of these and all qualified art therapists in the state of Connecticut by voting in support of Proposed S.B. No. 250. Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to present this oral testimony.

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