

Re; SB68

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

My name is Amanda Asrelesky. I am in my last semester of study at Central Connecticut State University's Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program. I am writing to share my experiences in the field with the intent to gain your support for legislation to create an Associate license (LMFTA) for Marriage and Family Therapists in the state of Connecticut.

I am nearing the end of my two-year internship with Klingberg Family Centers in New Britain, Connecticut. I work with families facing immense social, emotional and economic tribulation. I provide therapeutic services at the clinic, and at Northend Elementary school, also in New Britain. I facilitate the therapeutic process with clients and their families by examining and healing the binds of past trauma. Incorporating a systemic approach, I act as a family advocate in school, attend provider meetings, and gather information and referrals for outside services. I build relationships to strengthen the vital network of support for each of my clients. The foundation for these connections is trust, consistency and open communication. It is through hours of one-on-one and group supervision, support from peers, access to licensed therapists, and experience in the field that I am able to offer informed and personalized care to my clients' and their families.

My peers and I were instrumental in the rollout of programs to promote social and emotional learning in New Britain public schools. Projects like Love Wins and Zones of Regulation make a positive impact on a school system in desperate need of progress and fresh ideas. I work synergistically with the New Britain School System and mental health care agencies like the Department of Children and Families, Care Coordination, and the Mobile Crisis Unit to facilitate appropriate aid and treatment for every client. I participate in evidence-based training such as Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Systems of Care, Love Wins and Circle of Security to learn and expand treatment options for our diverse population.

Upon graduation I, like many of my peers will reenter our communities and public schools, eagerly in search of work that will allow us to continue our dream of becoming full-time Marriage and Family Therapists. *I fear that my momentum may be halted by the process of a prolonged licensing period and sparse job opportunities. Despite my advanced degree and the relationships established during the internship process, I am unable to apply for a paying position in a role identical to that which I found success in for the past two years.*

The relationships we MFTs build with community and clients is positive, viable, and powerful. The LMFTA would provide continuity, support, and development

for the growing therapist community. It could make the difference for many when deciding whether to pursue opportunities here in Connecticut, or look elsewhere to begin their professional career.

Please vote to support the HB6861 proposal.
Thank you for your time,

Amanda Asrelsky
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