

Hello –

I wanted to respectfully share that I am opposed to the Raised Bill No. 133 which is before the general assembly (presented by the Public Health Committee) on 2/19/16 entitled: “An act concerning licensing for professional counselors.”

My opposition lies in that the suggested change from our present licensure system in CT to a two-tier licensure system would only allow for individuals with the Master Professional Counselor credential to become a Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC). This would exclude several hundred present current mental health providers (not taking into account future professionals) who are providing quality and competent counseling services in the state from receiving this important licensure distinction (LPC) simply on the basis of 1) their degree program not having the word “counseling” in the title and 2) the academic program not completing a multi-year, overly intensive, and exhausting CACREP accreditation process.

More specifically, I do agree that in order to become a LPC an individual should obtain 60 graduate level credits. However, I don’t believe that only graduates of “60 credit-hours graduate degree in counseling” programs should be given this advantage over other counseling or helping-based programs. I believe that these new statutes would create issues for not only present providers in the state (lack of jobs, significant decrease in tax dollars, etc.), but also those who are interested in becoming licensed in our state in the future. Limiting licensure to only 60 credit CACREP-approved counseling programs would hugely impact the present and future job marketability within the state as well as prevent many outstanding professionals from being considered for licensure. This would also prevent the state from critical revenue dollars needed for mental health services and related organizations from operating.

The career of a “counselor” should not be limited to only a select group of individuals who meet the strict and limiting criteria outlined in the suggested by vested parties bringing the legislation forward in Raised Bill No. 133. Connecticut is in a time where we want to grow and expand and create more job opportunities versus limit and exclude qualified residents. The state of CT could potentially reach a state of crisis in terms of well-trained clinicians able to provide services during a period when mental health issues are on the rise and competent providers are critical.

In summary, if Raised Bill No. 133 were to be approved this would have an enormously negative impact on CT in a time when our need for competent providers are paramount. This legislation will significantly limit and exclude exceptional mental health providers and have an epidemic impact on the overall quality of life for citizens in CT and surrounding areas.

Thank you for your time and listening to my concerns. If I can help further, please let me know.  
Best, Dr. Katey Baruth

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