

I am writing to share my concerns and opposition to HB-2493. By categorizing Life Coaches as unlicensed alternative therapy practitioners, this could limit where, when, and how highly-trained coaches practice their activities in the State of Oregon.

No other state or nation places this type of restriction on professional coaches or classifies coaches in this manner. Most importantly, coaching professionals aren't, make no claim to be, and are not regarded as therapists in the eye of the public or in other professional circles. There are therapists who use coaching methods in their practices, but professional coaches do not provide therapy in theirs.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Coaching is distinct from psychotherapy and other behavioral health interventions. As such, it requires highly specific education. ICF coaches complete at least 60 hours of education, but many have exceeded 200 hours of coach-specific education.

My own specialization as a Certified Neuroscience Coach required 100+ hours of live training, testing, and demonstration of coaching practice mastery.

The curricula of coach-specific training programs accredited by ICF are required to define the differences between coaching and behavioral health modalities and to address steps for referring clients to behavioral health care practitioners when appropriate. My practice is to refer out to another licensed professional when therapy may be needed -- not to offer it myself as coach.

All ICF coaches pledge to uphold a rigorous Code of Ethics that includes, among other provisions, a requirement for coaches to, "Encourage the client or sponsor [of the coaching engagement] to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource and suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate."

The ICF Code of Ethics and Core Competencies for coaches also emphasize the necessity of establishing a coaching agreement with clients that highlights the expectations and the limitations of the coaching relationship. ICF's own Ethical Conduct Review Process and Independent Review Board (IRB) protect consumers, ensure adherence to our code of ethics, and provide a venue for individuals to report practitioners' breaches of the code.

Our ICF Credentialing system also includes a three-year renewal requirement to ensure Credential-holders' pursuit of continuous education and ongoing familiarity with ethical guidelines governing the profession.

Given that the coaching profession and industry organizations such as the ICF already have established standards, guidelines, and codes of ethics in place that govern the practices of professional coaches, I am concerned that the proposed legislation in HB-2493 will severely constrain my (and others) ability to offer coaching services without additional registration requirements, training, and expenses -- all of which are unwarranted and unnecessary given that I (and other coaches) do not offer therapy to clients.

Please take this into consideration as you discuss HB-2493, its implications, and its unintended consequences for our profession. Thank you.