

As a Buddhist, Witch, and Mindfulness Coach based in Portland, I stand opposed to this legislation as it is written.

This Act constitutes religious discrimination due to its lack of applicability to Mainstream faith systems. People who counsel and coach through the lens of these religions are not required to hold a license nor disclose their background. They are not subject to a test, disciplinary actions, nor to do anything else required by this statute. Mainstream religious leaders are not subject to sanctions by secular authorities for their work with their parishioners, except when committing a hideous criminal act. Nor are they required to disclose the content of communications with members of their church, per the priest-penitent privilege, etc. Therefore, how can Oregon legislature determine what is an "acceptable" spiritual belief or practice?

While there is nothing wrong with providing qualifications and disclosure TO CLIENTS regarding advising members of the public about major life decisions and could actually increase the credibility of the work done in Alternative modes of healing. The language of the proposed Act seems deceptive and sophomoric. While on the one hand it appears to applaud the work of healers and practitioners of Alternative spiritual beliefs, it simultaneously disregards the good work of those same beliefs or systems and relegates them to a status below that of the Mainstream beliefs and systems.

As written, the Oregon Legislature would require that non-Christian, pagan, agnostic, and practitioners of Alternative spiritual beliefs get a license, pay for licensure, and otherwise do all the things that Mainstream practitioners are not required to do. There is more advising about family issues, mental disorders, major life decisions preformed by Mainstream practitioners, however these non-science, spiritual advisors are not required to pass a test, pay a fee, or otherwise do any of the things that the bill will require for other types of spiritual practices.

Since the support, spiritual healing, counseling to believers is not required of mainstream Christian churches, then this law Clearly Discriminates against non-Christian religions or spiritual belief systems. This licensing legislation is unconstitutional infringement upon the exercise of religious rights and practices, per the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment. State law must respect established constitutional rights at least as much (or more) than the federal Constitution.

1. A similar bill was introduced in 2017 and was tabled because there was a huge outcry against it. We don't want or need more regulations and an oversight board. We have a better approach that 11 other states use as their model. Its formal name is the Oregon Consumer Access and Right to Practice Complementary and Alternative Health Care Act.
2. The bill labels the current situation as an Emergency Situation and threat to public safety. But there is no documentation that there has been a public safety threat.
3. Alternative healers should not be regulated in the same way as medical or mental health professionals. It is not in an Alternative healer's job description to assess, diagnose or treat a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder - only to support these efforts. This bill takes away the right of Oregonians to choose their own healthcare needs.
4. The definition of alternative well-being provider is too vague. Care givers, certain types of ministries, and other professions fall under the given definition. Alternative professions, with no relationship with each other, have been lumped together into one category.
5. Alternative health care providers have no say as to who is to govern them. There is no provision to put alternative healthcare providers on the governing boards.
6. This bill jeopardizes our livelihood during difficult times.

We can do better for Oregon.

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