

# Written Testimony Against House Bill 2493

Dear Legislators,

My name is Adrienne L. Glover. I am a Reiki Master Teacher, a Minister with the Universal Life Church and an International Association of Reiki Professionals member. I live in Chicago, Illinois.

Like you, I'm deeply concerned about the welfare of Oregonians and with the practices of alternative and complementary healthcare.

While I applaud the Oregon legislature for working hard during these difficult times, I have the following serious concerns about HB 2493:

1A. HB 2493 possibly constitutes religious discrimination due to its lack of applicability to priests or even lay priests in the major/"mainstream" religions. Because Christian, Muslim, and Jewish pastors and religious people are not required to hold a license or disclose their background, they are not subject to a test, they are not subject to discipline, nor to do any of the other things that this statute would require of anyone who does not follow one of the three major monotheistic religions. Priests also are not subject to sanctions or "discipline" by secular authorities for their work with their parishioners, unless the priest commits a horrific criminal act. Nor are Christian priests required to disclose the content of communications with members of their church, per the priest-penitent privilege, etc.

1B. HB 2493 would require that non-Christian, pagan, agnostic, or followers of alternative spiritual beliefs get a license, pay for licensure, and otherwise do all the things that Christian or other "priests" are not required to do. Pastors and lay pastors frequently advise people about family issues, mental disorders, major life decisions, etc. In Christian churches in this country, such spiritual advisors are not required to pass a test, pay a fee, or do any of the other things that the bill will require for other types of spiritual practices. If all the other spiritual practices, or practices of other religions (like Wiccan, pagan, Sikh etc.), are required to be regulated, then this law discriminates against non-Christian and non-monotheistic religions and/or spiritual belief systems. There is a strong argument to be made that this infringes upon the free exercise of various religions in favor of Christian practices. This legislation will not pass constitutional muster in State or federal courts.

1C. This licensing legislation is likely a violation upon the exercise of religious rights and practices, per the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment. Specifically, the provision that prohibits the Congress from crafting legislature "respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." State law must respect established constitutional rights at least as much as the federal Constitution, per the Constitution of the United States of America.

2. What authority might the Oregon legislature have to determine the definition of an "acceptable" spiritual belief or practice? Given that the United States Constitution outlines

freedom of religion in this country, HB 2493 appears to be in direct conflict with this right to religious freedom.

3. HB 2493's language appears deceptive. On one hand, it appears to applaud the work of energy workers and holders of "alternative" spiritual beliefs, Yet HB 2493 simultaneously disregards those same spiritual beliefs or systems, and relegates them to a status well below that of the standard, primarily Christian religious sects.

4. In 2017, a similar bill was introduced. It was tabled because there was a huge outcry against it. This is because the public neither wants nor needs more regulations, nor does it need or want an oversight board regarding spiritually-based systems and practices.

5. The proposed bill labels the current situation as an emergency situation and threat to public safety. Yet, there has been no documentation of such a public safety threat.

6. Complementary and alternative healers do not provide medical, behavioral health or mental health counseling. Therefore, they should not be regulated in the same way. Most of us complementary and alternative healers spend a great deal of time training initially and also spend a lot of time in continuing education. At the same time, we are not medical, behavioral or mental health counselors. An attempt to regulate these industries using similar requirements is therefore unnecessary as these practices do not include such kinds of counseling.

7. It is not in an alternative healthcare provider's job description to assess, diagnose or treat a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder. Nor do alternative and complementary service providers offer such diagnoses. In my professional practice I never diagnose or assess mental, emotional or behavioral disorders, nor do I purport to offer such services to my clientele. This is the role of medical and behavioral health professionals. As such, the notion that this would occur is an affront to my profession and the level of care that I provide my clients, which includes referring them to such medical and behavioral health professionals when it appears that this may be supportive of their care. This is not within my purview and to consider that I would take such actions violates the ethics to which I abide by as a member of the International Association of Reiki Professionals.

8. This bill revokes the right of Oregonians to choose their own healthcare providers..

9. The definition of an alternative well-being provider is too vague. Caregivers, certain types of ministries, and other professions fall under the given definition.

10. Too many professions that have no relationship with each other have been lumped together into one category. To conflate a variety of professions into a lump category would be akin to regulating a writer with the same requirements as a gardener.

11. Alternative and complementary health care providers have no say as to who is to govern them.

12. There is no provision to put alternative healthcare providers on the governing boards. To regulate an industry without the industry knowledge required is a disservice to the public which HB2493 claims to wish to protect - again - with no documentation of any concerns outlined in this legislation being an actual public crisis. This is in contrast to the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken the lives of millions of Americans, or the opioid crisis, which also has killed millions of Americans.

13. The passage of this bill would put many Oregon alternative and complementary healthcare practitioners out of work during difficult times. This would negatively impact the State and national economies, which are already suffering. Small business owners are struggling right now and to thwart an entrepreneur's ability to make a living will deprive Oregonians of needed services as well as the ability to bolster business in a downturn economy.

14. A better approach already exists, which 11 other states use as their model of legislation. Its formal name is the Oregon Consumer Access and right to Practice Complementary and Alternative Health Care Act. (Working name: Safe Harbor Exemption for short). Many other states are introducing or preparing to introduce this. It has guardrails that practitioners need to stay within and includes disclosure about what training and experience a practitioner has. If a practice/practitioner violates these, then there is legal recourse with laws that already are in place.

Thank you,

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Founder and Principal, A Glorious Kaleidoscope