

To the Oregon House of Representatives and whom it may concern,

I hold a B.A. in Psychology and will soon be entering graduate school to become a mental health worker.

I am also a Reiki practitioner and in training to be a Certified Focusing Practitioner (International Focusing Institute). Reiki is a gentle hands-on modality that has clinically documented benefits of alleviating anxiety and pain, improving emotional wellbeing in patients, and improving heart rate function in heart attack patients. Focusing training resembles life coaching and meditation.

I am deeply concerned with public health and wellbeing, which is why I engage in this work. While I support regulations for medical and mental health workers, I oppose the regulation of alternative health services proposed in Bill HB 2493. I believe the proposed registry is unnecessary to protect public safety and that it would interfere with the public's ability to access alternative health services.

I do not believe unregulated alternative health services that improve emotional, relational, and personal growth pose an emergency hazard to the public. I have been both a user and a student of alternative practices for nearly two decades, and I have never encountered an instance or heard of an instance of a client being harmed or misled by an alternative healing practitioner.

Additionally, I have been researching regulation of alternative therapies for several months and am not aware of any reports of misconduct from Reiki or Focusing professionals. Engaging in practices such as Reiki, life coaching, focusing, and meditation have only enriched my health and wellness. and those of family and friends.

Having additional fees and the added requirements of an exam would be an added burden for opening a business combining my mental health degree with alternative healing approaches, which is what I hope to do, and what many other practitioners already do. Unnecessary regulations would create another barrier between practitioners and those seeking care.

Furthermore, this regulation would disproportionately impact non-English speaking and minority communities. There are no provisions in the bill to accommodate practitioners and clients of non-English speaking communities, many of whom widely employ cultural healing modalities that would fall under jurisdiction of this bill (i.e. reflexology, shamanic practices, Qigong). The paperwork and an exam in English could discourage or prevent practitioners from becoming registered.

I am also concerned that the lack of specificity in this bill would lead to overreaches of regulation, especially regarding religious/spiritual practices. Many religious services (meditation courses, parochial counseling, shamanic work) would fall under HB 2493's regulation, which seems to infringe on the freedom of religious communities to practice their healing traditions,

Finally, the bill does not specify between services granted for free or those paid. The NW Reiki Association has a thriving volunteer partnership with the Compass Oncology Clinics throughout Portland. The volunteers are already required to attend trainings and hold personal liability insurance. Additional registration with the state could hinder this program, preventing cancer patients' access to complementary care.