

I first would like to applaud the work of Representative Andrea Salinas, the House Committee on Behavioral Health, the OBLPCT, and the many alternative practitioners who worked together to develop HB2493 and for having the courage and insight to do so.

I read with interest the testimony that has been submitted for the Public Hearing on this bill on My 10. As expected, it's almost entirely from those who oppose this legislation. Some say it's unnecessary. Some say it could cost jobs. Others, that it's voluntary, so, "what's the point?" while still others contend that the voluntary nature of the registry is just a step toward an involuntary registry.

Another notes in an expression of disapproval that, "The delegation of authority is so broad that it includes but is not limited to: ... *Establishing standards of professional conduct.*" As a consumer, that sounds like a pretty good idea to me. One witness testified that no one asked alternative practitioners for feedback on this bill as it was being written and that they didn't know about it until it had been written. I was present for the Behavioral Health Committee meetings in February 2020 when this bill was being discussed (no, I don't work in the industry). There were more alternative practitioners offering testimony than others. In fact, the idea of the registry came from them. They were then a part of the work group that created the language in this bill. If someone wasn't made aware of this bill, it could very well be because no one knows who they are, and that's part of the problem.

If anyone, historically, has been under represented throughout this process and that of 2017 (HB2361), it is the victims of untrained, unaccountable charlatans and predators who have taken advantage of the lack of oversight, regulation, and "standards of professional conduct." These victims weren't kept out of the process; they choose to not come forward with their stories. Who could blame them? Many may not even be aware that they're being scammed. I chose otherwise. My full story is too long to tell here, but, when I became aware of what was happening with this person – who had identified himself as a marriage counselor and therapist to my, now, ex-wife – I filed a complaint with the OBLPCT. Its investigators dutifully and professionally investigated the matter. This person had violated every conceivable standard of professional conduct. He has no training, education, or background of any kind in any related field. He preys on the weak and wounded. Unfortunately, there was nothing the Board could do because he had no obligation to cooperate with the investigation and he knew that. In short, they had no jurisdiction. Our lives were destroyed, he moved on to his next victim.

Lacking the abundance of details that go with this story, it would be easy to dismiss it as anecdotal; one-off; your wife was just a floosy, and so forth. Though it is, by definition, anecdotal, none of the rest would be true. And, as Immanuel Kant pointed out, the actual proves the possible. How many like him are out there? Who are they? Where are they? There's no way of knowing. Would this bill and the voluntary registry eliminate them all? Of course, it would not. There are bad actors in every profession, mine included. But, we should do what we can. What we're unable to prevent, we should at least attempt to hold accountable.

Something I learned very early in my thirty-two year career in Public Safety is that if a profession or an industry doesn't police itself, someone, eventually, will do that for you. That's

why we have OSHA, FDA, HIPAA, NLRB, and the list goes on. That is why I am so grateful for and proud of the alternative providers who stepped up and involved themselves in this process. I don't understand why one would be opposed to having a modicum of protection, regulation, and accountability for a profession and/or career I cherished.

I strongly support and urge passage of this bill. It will provide a much-needed layer of protection for the most vulnerable among us as well as for legitimate alternative providers, licensed practitioners, and the industry as a whole.

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