

Testimony in Favor of the -3 Amendments to HB 4071 (Counseling Compact)

Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

As a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) practicing in Oregon, past-president of the Oregon Counseling Association, and member of the COPACT board, I am writing to express strong support for including the Counseling Compact as an amendment to HB4071 (-3 proposed amendments).

Much like the occupational licensure compacts for nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists and EMS personnel, the Counseling Compact will increase licensure portability for counselors, while allowing member state regulatory boards to better protect consumers through enhanced sharing of licensure information. Existing interstate occupational licensure compacts have been successful in reducing barriers for practitioners who wish to provide services in other states.

I believe that the Counseling Compact will benefit consumers—and the counseling profession—by:

- Increasing access to care for Oregon clients;
- Enhancing mobility for counselors who meet uniform licensure requirements;
- Ensuring continuity of care when clients or counselors relocate or travel to other states, and;
- Preserving and strengthening the current system of state licensure.

Importantly, the Counseling Compact ensures clients stay working with trusted practitioners during difficult life transitions such a relocation. For example, when a long-term client I worked with for many years moved out of state, she experienced a public shooting. When she reached out for help with this tragedy, I had to say no. In another case, a young man I had counseled through high school went out of state to college, he needed support in adjusting to the stressors of being away at school, but I could not see him. Every clinician I know has similar stories. Enacting the Counseling Compact allows clients to get the care they need with providers they know while strengthening the overall counseling profession.

I am excited to support the Counseling Compact and its addition to HB 4071, and urge you to adopt the -3 Amendments.

Sincerely,

Tever Nickerson, LPC