

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair's Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

My name is Greg Minikes. I live in Portland, Oregon. I have been working in Portland as a mental health tech in inpatient psychiatric care for about 6 years. I write today to encourage you to **support the -2 Amendments to HB 4071, which would enact the Social Work Licensing Compact.**

I am passionate about the social work licensing compact, as a social work student and a longtime mental health worker **I have been personally impacted by the staffing shortage in mental healthcare, specifically in the inpatient psychiatric setting.** Though hospitals like the one I work in bill insurance to provide therapeutic services, we often don't have enough licensed therapists on staff to provide the two daily groups we have scheduled for all our patients. This impacts not only the quality of patients' experience in the inpatient setting but is also extremely stressful for staff, as **we care about our patients and want them to receive the services they are being billed for.**

I currently intern at a community health clinic in downtown Portland that provides limited mental health support, in addition to primary care, to a majority homeless-experienced patient base. Many of our patients ask about ongoing therapy sessions, either in a group setting or one-on-one, and **I often have to tell patients that we simply don't have options available for long-term psychotherapy.** Given the high prevalence of trauma among our patient base, the lack of mental health staff and resources is simply unacceptable.

Social worker/s are the lifeblood of the behavioral health workforce. Social workers are omnipresent throughout our society, including in the government, schools, universities, social service agencies, communities, the military, health care, and mental health organizations. We need more of them in Oregon.

Again, please **support the -2 Amendments to HB 4071, which would enact the Social Work Licensing Compact, which will lessen the behavioral health workforce shortage in Oregon.**

Thank you for your time.

Greg Minikes

Portland State

[First and Last Name]

[School, Expected Graduation Year (Example, Lewis and Clark Law School, Expected May 2013)]

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