

Written Testimony in Support of HB 3351: Enacting the Interstate Counseling Compact in Oregon

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

My name is Wendy Curtis, and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor practicing in the Multnomah Village/Southwest area of Portland, OR. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3351, which would allow Oregon to join the Interstate Counseling Compact.

How the Counseling Compact Would Benefit My Practice

For the past ten years in private practice, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges my clients face when they need to move out of state for work, school, or other life circumstances. Many of these individuals, including college students returning home after graduation, lose access to continuity of care because they are required to find a new therapist in their new state. While this may seem like a simple transition, the reality is far more complex. Finding a therapist who is both a good fit and specializes in their unique needs can be incredibly difficult, particularly for LGBTQ+ clients, who make up approximately 40% of my caseload. For some, the difficulty in finding an appropriate provider leads to the unfortunate decision to discontinue therapy altogether, leaving them without the critical support they need.

By joining the Counseling Compact, Oregon can:

- **Expand Access to Care:** Allowing licensed counselors from other member states to practice in Oregon will increase the availability of mental health professionals, particularly in underserved and rural areas.
- **Support Military Families and Relocated Clients:** Military families and individuals who move frequently would benefit from continued access to their counselors without interruption.
- **Reduce Administrative Burdens:** The Compact will streamline the licensing process, saving time and financial resources for both practitioners and regulatory agencies.
- **Maintain High Professional Standards:** Participating states share disciplinary information to ensure the quality and safety of care provided across state lines.

Why This Matters for My Clients

One of my clients, who had a history of trauma, admitted to me that he was unlikely to go to therapy once he'd moved away, as it was so difficult to think about "starting over" with a new therapist. This bill would allow me to continue supporting him once he'd moved to another state.

As a provider, I see HB 3351 as a crucial step toward expanding access to quality care while ensuring efficiency in serving more clients. I encourage you to support this bill to enhance Oregon's mental health system and make essential services more accessible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy Curtis, LPC
2929 SW Multnomah Blvd., Suite 210
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 290-6107
wendy@livegrowtransform.com