

Peaceful Warrior Wellness Services, LLC

11630 SE 40th Ave. Milwaukie, OR 97222

Phone: (503) 650-0680 ·

Dr. Steven Ruiz Bettencourt, Psy.D, LPC, CH.t , EMDR

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 Steven Ruiz Bettencourt, and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor, practicing in the Portland Metropolitan Area in Oregon. 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

As is the feeling of many of my colleagues, I have been concerned for many years, with the impact of the interruption of care when a client moves to another state or visits regularly to care for a loved one. It feels very unfair and unethical to interrupt this continuity of care when they are outside of Oregon which has a high potential for exacerbating mental health issues.

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.
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Why This Matters for My Clients

In the case of emergency travel, vacationing, work travel, etc, I believe that my client have a right to receive continuity of care, especially to our most vulnerable population.

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,

Dr. Steven Ruiz Bettencourt, Psy.D, LPC
Peacewarriorcounseling@gmail.com
503-650-0680