

Testimony to Health and Human Services Committee on House Bill 2340

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura Shaughnessy. I am the Counseling board member for the Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board. I have also been in private practice as a licensed professional counselor for over 20 years. My purpose before you today is to support the introduction and passage of HB 2340. I am proud to serve on the BSRB, whose mission is to protect the public, to ensure that behavioral health education is of the highest quality, and to make licensure in our state accessible to as many qualified applicants as possible. The items presented in HB 2340 are the direct result of numerous committee meetings, feedback from behavioral health leaders in our state, consultation from BSRB staff, and a review of our statutes and regulations in order to ensure that Kansas standards reflect the current issues that behavioral health experts face today.

The provisions in this bill will provide new pathways to licenses in Social Work, and Addiction Counseling. Changes to reciprocity statutes will lower the number of years of practice required from 48 months to twelve. These changes will encourage professionals to seek licensure in Kansas, allowing for a potentially increased workforce. Allowing temporary licensees to practice for up to 2 years instead of 1 will allow more individuals to work while completing requirements such as licensing examinations. By reducing licensing reinstatement fees and providing extended time to complete continuing education hours, additional professionals will be kept in our workforce. Additionally, statutory cleanup presented in this bill is part of an ongoing process to make sure language is consistent, achieves the desired goal of protecting the public, and avoids legal jeopardy.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Laura Shaughnessy