

To: Senate Workforce Development Committee

From:

Date: February 10, 2025

Re: SB2357 - a bill establishing a composite board for mental health professionals

My name is Brenda King.

I am a licensed psychologist in North Dakota and practice

I provide written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2357

SB2357 establishes a composite board for mental health professionals, eliminating the boards for psychologists, social workers, addiction counselors, professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists. It falls short in multiple ways.

The legislatively established tier system for defining behavioral health and mental health professionals places clinical or counseling psychologists in Tier 1a with psychiatrists.

Psychiatrist and psychologist training is roughly equivalent and at a doctoral level. Clinical social workers, addiction counselors, and professional counselors in Tier 2. While creating a composite licensing board with similarly tiered professionals may simplify and streamline processes, including psychologists in this mix does not.

Not all licensed psychologists qualify as mental health professionals. While industrial-organization psychologists hold licenses, they are not clinical psychologists and do not provide mental health services.

Like clinical social workers and other mental health counselors, many licensed psychologists are trained to diagnose and treat behavioral health disorders. However, psychologists possess additional expertise in using psychometric instruments to diagnose mental health disorders and to measure a person's intelligence, aptitude, cognitive capacity, personality characteristics, and risk factors for certain types of violent behaviors. This additional expertise makes measuring their competence and hearing grievances unique and requires oversight by other psychologists.

Psychologist education and expertise make their license and oversight unique among the identified other groups therefore, I urge the committee to vote no on SB2357 as written.

Psychologists do not belong on this composite licensing board