

Prepared Testimony of the North Dakota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy

Testimony in Opposition to SB 2395

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is prepared on behalf of the North Dakota Board of Marriage and Family Therapists following a special meeting to discuss this bill. We, the board, are asking you to vote in opposition to SB 2395 or in support with the below modifications. Our board has multiple concerns over what moving towards a composite board would mean for the citizens of North Dakota to be outlined below.

1. First concern is the 7 days to issue a license. This would be an extremely short time frame in comparison with bordering states. The Board of Marriage and Family therapists meets on a quarterly basis unless special requirements call for a special meeting. This board is made up of professional therapists with full time jobs that volunteer for the board to provide service to our state. To call them out of their roles to issue a license within 7 days is an unreasonable ask that would disrupt their service to North Dakotans. It would be reasonable to have this number be 30 days to allow for these volunteer members to gather for special meetings and have a quorum to grant licenses.
2. Under number 5 of the proposed bill there is a new requirement on license data. This appears to be an attempt to increase management of volunteers in our state whom are experts in their professions. It is often already difficult to get skilled members to join the board, and this additional requirement would exacerbate this. Our boards do not need increased outside micromanagement.

We owe it to our board members to keep holding these volunteer positions as streamlined with as few burdens as possible so that they can focus on keeping North Dakotans safe via their expertise in each unique professions' board. Please vote against SB 2395 or amend with above changes.

Respectfully,



Shauna Erickson-Abou Zahr M.S., LMFT on behalf of North Dakota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy

Vice President of the North Dakota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy