

Montana Psychological Association

Senate Bill 297

Comments from Members

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	<u>3</u>
DATE:	<u>1-31-05</u>
BILL NO.	<u>SB 297</u>

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I oppose the MFT bill as well. In Colorado the MFTs are licensed as LCPCs and can apply their training to that license arena. They do not usually have the training sufficient to satisfy MSW standards.

Vicki

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Generally speaking, I do not see any need for yet another specialty certification for treating "specific problems" in the mental health field. We already have at least three levels of licensure for primary mental health professionals in Montana (more, if you include physicians, psychiatric nurses, addictions counselors, etc.), and that should be sufficient. I believe that if someone wants to be a "marriage and family therapist" they should become licensed as a psychologist, a clinical social worker, or an LCPC, and then go to work. If a person's training and experience are inadequate for them to be licensed as a psychologist, LCSW, or LCPC, why institute yet another (lower? different?) level of training? My understanding is that most MFT programs train people as social workers. I say, let them become licensed as social workers. If someone doesn't have the requisite training or experience to become licensed under our current code and regulations, let them obtain it.

In Section 7, paragraph 2: While the main thrust of this paragraph is to ostensibly allow "individuals licensed as professional counselors, social workers, psychiatric nurses, psychologists, or physicians or members of the clergy or other qualified members of professional groups defined by the board [to advertise or perform] the practice of marriage and family therapy in a manner consistent with the accepted standards of their respective professions," the concluding sentence of the paragraph reads: "Only licensees under [sections 2 through 8] may use any title described in subsection (1)(b)." That is to say, only people licensed under this enabling legislation would be able to "use the title of "marriage therapist", "marital therapist", or "marriage and family therapist"." I - and many others like me - as a psychologist with university training at the graduate level in family therapy and in couples therapy - as well as over seven years experience working with couples and families - would not be able to call

myself a "marriage therapist." Not withstanding the provisions of Section 7, paragraph 2, it's just another small step to preventing any other mental health professionals not licensed under this legislation from actually performing marital therapy or family therapy.

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A problem with this Bill for psychologists is that if you cannot legally describe the type of work you can legally do, and for which you have been professionally trained, you will be compromised in your effective delivery of such services to the public.

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