



**Testimony of Jonathan Stern, LPC
President, the Connecticut Counseling Association
in support of
HB 6666- AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC
HEALTH STATUTES.**

Public Health Committee Hearing, March 29, 2021

Senator Daugherty Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Jonathan Stern and I am the current President of the Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA), the professional organization that represents professional counselors and counseling graduate students here in Connecticut.

I am grateful for the opportunity to express CCA's strong support of Section 16 of HB 6666-An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes. We would also be remiss if we did not thank the committee for the establishment of the Professional Counselor Associate licensure which has led to licensure of 614 post-graduates over the last year plus.

The language in Section 16 of HB6666 would insert grandfathering provisions for the Professional Counselor (LPC) and Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA) licenses. These revisions are necessary in order to allow currently practicing unlicensed master's level counselors the opportunity to obtain their LPCA and/or LPC under the licensure requirements in place prior to recent changes made with the implementation of Public Act 17-94 and Public Act 19-117 in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

These revisions would allow those master's level counselors who graduated prior to July 1, 2017, and have met certain criteria to be exempt from the curriculum and fieldwork changes made with the passage of Public Act 17-94. This grandfathering provision was an essential part of the language of Public Act 17-94, however, with the

subsequent passage of Public Act 19-117 this language was inadvertently removed. The revisions proposed in Section 16 would reinstitute this grandfathering language so that those eligible practicing counselors who received degrees prior to July 1, 2017, can become licensed as LPCs under the “old” requirements.

Passage of HB6666 would also create a grandfathering provision to allow those counselors who earn a graduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in counseling or a related mental health field prior to 7/1/2021 and have completed at least 3,000 hours of supervised experience to be eligible for licensure as an LPCA. This revision would allow those counselors who have already been practicing in the field under supervision for a period of time but do not meet the updated requirements outlined in Public Act 19-117 to still be eligible for licensure.

HB6666 would support those counseling graduates and currently matriculated students with anticipated graduation dates prior to July 1, 2021, who do not meet the new requirements for licensure, to be able to obtain licensure. This helps alleviate the growing demands of the mental health population in Connecticut by providing additional qualified, experienced licensed clinicians. The bill also addresses the needs of those counselors who have been practicing in the field under supervision for a length of time but do not meet the new requirements for licensure by providing an avenue towards associate licensure and thus increased oversight and consumer protection.

In summary, passage of HB6666 will allow for a more than sufficient grandfathering period to support those currently matriculating counseling students and practicing unlicensed counselors to obtain their LPCA or LPC.

CCA thanks you for your consideration of our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Stern, LPC
President, Connecticut Counseling Association