

Subject: Please Preserve the Tennessee Professional Counselor Licensure Board (SB 2227/HB2539)

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name],

My name is **[INSERT NAME]**, and I am a **[PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION: Licensed Professional Counselor, etc.]** in Tennessee. I am writing to respectfully ask that you preserve the Tennessee Board for Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Marital and Family Therapists, and Licensed Clinical Pastoral Therapists as SB 2227 / HB 2539 move forward. A counseling-specific licensure board ensures that regulatory decisions are informed by professionals who understand the clinical standards, ethical practice, supervision requirements, and training standards of our profession. This protects both the public and the integrity of our profession.

Dissolving the board or moving licensure oversight to a commission-run structure without counseling-specific expertise risks:

- **Public Safety:** The board plays an important role in maintaining counseling-specific ethical guidelines, supervision standards, and disciplinary review processes. This bill could weaken public protection through diluted professional oversight, putting Tennesseans at risk for harm when seeking mental health services
- **Professional Equity:** At this time, similar changes do not appear to be proposed for other helping profession boards (such as psychology, social work, or alcohol and drug counseling) causing a potential imbalance across behavioral health professions.
- **Mental Health Access:** Removing counselor-specific regulatory oversight could create barriers for new counselors entering practice and worsen existing provider shortages. It may also affect Tennessee's ability to participate in the Counseling Compact, which supports interstate practice and telehealth access.

As Tennessee continues to face high demand for mental health services, it is essential that professional standards remain guided by experts in the field. I respectfully urge you to maintain the current licensure board structure and ensure that counseling-specific regulatory expertise remains intact.

Thank you for your time and your services to Tennessee.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Credentials]

[Professional Designation]

[Address]

[Contact Information]