

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
Am. HOUSE BILL 503**

December 3, 2008

By

Dr. Cathy McDaniels Wilson

Good Afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Dr. Cathy McDaniels Wilson. I am a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of Ohio. I am the Past President of the Ohio Psychological Association and a member of the American Psychological Association. I am speaking to you on behalf of nearly 2,100 Ohio psychologists and graduate students to urge you to consider the proposed changes in our current licensing laws.

I hold a full time faculty appointment at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Xavier University is in its tenth year of educating graduate students in clinical psychology. We offer a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology. We admit 18 to 20 graduate students per year and graduate 90% of students after 5.2 years.

During the five years of clinical education, students learn to integrate theory, research, and practice to become skilled professionals who understand the importance of the scientific foundation of psychology and are prepared to assume one of the many roles of professional psychologists. Regardless of the specific role graduates of our program move on to fulfill, it is expected that they will make significant contributions to the well-being of others.

The current licensure model calls for a post-doctoral year of supervised experience as a requirement for licensure. Today, many professionals in the field agree that this model is outdated and creates barriers to both financial and professional progress.

The model that is now recommended, and which is the basis of Am. HB503, pairs the required one-year pre-doc internship with a second year of training that can occur either before or after completion of the internship. Changing the law will give trainees who are prepared to function independently the opportunity to be licensed upon graduation. Those who wish, or who may not have completed sufficient pre-doctoral training hours can fulfill the requirement post-doctorally.

As a result of these proposed changes, graduate programs in psychology will organize the progression of pre-doctoral and pre-internship practica to better prepare trainees to be competent clinicians when they reach their internship year. Rules that will be developed by the Board of Psychology will set clear standards for this organized progression.

From an academic perspective, I believe the proposed changes in the licensing law will only lead to an increase in the quality of education and training of our students. We as faculty are aware of the responsibility that we have to measure and assess the clinical competency of our graduate trainees so that they are prepared to function autonomously at the point when they complete their doctoral training, including the internship.

Universities are prepared to review their curriculum to assure its consistency with the proposed changes and that they provide opportunity for all students to gain sufficient pre-doctoral hours as part of the curriculum. As you can see, this process is not likely to weaken the training of our practitioners, but to strengthen curriculum and competency-based protocol.

For example, we take very seriously our responsibility to assess clinical competence. Programs strive to have in place effective methods of measuring competency, so that when students are ready to move to this next level or apply for internship, their skills set are identifiable and intact. The National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP) have developed core competencies. The Clinical Competency Examination or Major Qualifying Examinations are facilitated by two or more faculty members, and typically require the student to demonstrate competency in oral and written modalities. Clinical case supervision and review is also a major part of this examination.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.