



Laughlin Township Constable's Office

Jordan Ross, Constable

55 Civic Way
Laughlin NV 89029-1563
Administrative Office: 702-298-2311
Website: <http://www.laughlinconstable.org>

Testimony

Before the Legislative Committee on Health Care

24 August 2016

Chairman Oscarson, Members of the Committee, good morning. For the record, my name is Jordan Ross, Constable of the Township of Laughlin.

I'm here to briefly speak on Item IV of the committee's agenda today. Nevada is currently in a crisis of supply when it comes to ensuring adequate numbers of mental health counselors, yet regrettably current state government practice actually erects barriers to that need.

Self interest from existing professions of mental health counselors, especially Clinical Social Workers has resulted in price fixing, restraint of trade, defying the intent of the legislature, shortages of therapists, and a general negative impact on the mental health crisis, especially in rural areas.

A wider variety of stakeholders need to be consulted on these issues. Many of my own constituents whether due to their age or economic circumstances, find themselves not only suffering from the general shortage of therapists, but additionally penalized for living in a rural community with all the additional attendant challenges that entails. Despite the passage of NRS 641A.231, the state continues to refuse to allow Clinical Professional Counselors, commonly known as CPC's, to engage in Family Therapy. This blatant disregard for the intent of the legislature has had real life tragic consequences.

I would echo Assemblywoman Woodbury's comments on reciprocity barriers, but suggest that larger issues are at play as well. The multiplicity of agencies regulating mental health professionals, who in theory should place the welfare of the public first, have instead become co-opted by the very practitioners they are supposed to regulate. Like you, I am an elected official, and we are all aware of how often this can happen in a regulatory environment, where there is such a narrow focus that the agency in question usually operates with little scrutiny and

oversight and generally under the radar of the media, the legislature, and the public at large.

It is for this reason that I urge the Committee to consider a radical restructuring of the agencies licensing and regulating mental health professionals, into a single board. Not only will this increase the nominal numbers of mental health counselors, but it will increase competition allowing for superior service to be delivered to the public. Without this bold step, I fear that parochial interests will continue to come before those of our constituents, who are the ones who place their trust in us every election to do what is best for them.

This concludes my statement Mister Chairman. I wish to thank the Committee for its time and attention and I appreciate the opportunity to share my views with you. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you and your fellow committee members may have.

