

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 02 2007

RE: S.B. No. 667
S.D. 2

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Affordable Housing, to which was referred S.B. No. 667, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to provide individuals who graduated from an accredited mental health counselor program prior to July 1, 2007, with alternative methods for satisfying the practicum intern experience and post-graduate experience requirements necessary for licensure.

Written comments in support of this measure were submitted by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and one individual. Written comments in opposition of this measure were submitted by the Alliance for Professional Counselor Licensure.

Your Committee finds that, pursuant to Act 14, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, the Legislature increased the requirements for licensure of mental health counselors. However, Act 14 created a gap group of individuals who would be prohibited from licensure under the new law. Your Committee further finds that the provision of alternative methods for licensure are appropriate to ensure that these individuals may satisfy the requirements necessary for licensure without compromising the essential qualifications determined by the Legislature.



This measure provides alternative methods for satisfying necessary requirements for licensure for individuals who graduated from an accredited mental health counseling program prior to July 1, 2007. However, your Committee determines that further clarification is necessary to ensure that a suitable amount of experience is completed before licensure is granted and the alternative methods provided are truly substitutes for and not additions to the existing requirements.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the method for satisfying the practicum intern experience requirement is an alternative method to that currently provided under the law;
- (2) Clarifying that the method for satisfying the post-graduate experience requirement for licensure is an alternative method to that currently provided under the law;
- (3) Specifying that under either method, at least three thousand hours of post-graduate experience is required for licensure; and
- (4) Amending the effective date to promote further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Affordable Housing that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 667, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 667, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Commerce, Consumer
Protection, and Affordable
Housing,


BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI, Chair



