

Testimony in Support of

Am. HB 503

Before the Senate Health, Human Services and Aging
Committee

Senator Kevin Coughlin, Chair

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Chair, Ohio Psychological Association Advocacy
Committee

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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee Members. My name is Dr. David Hayes. I am a board certified clinical psychologist and a Past President of the Ohio Psychological Association (OPA). Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Am HB503

In 2006, the American Psychological Association (APA) made a change in its policy about what sequence of education and training should lead to licensure in psychology. This policy change was a response to changes that have occurred in the education and training of graduate students in psychology over the last twenty or more years, and was designed to more closely align licensure and training. When states first began licensing psychologists, graduate students received most of their clinical experience in an internship and, after they finished their internship and their degree, in a post-doctoral year. The essence of the requirement was that at least two years of supervised experience were needed, one of which was to be completed post-doctorally. Fast forward to the present. In current day programs, psychology graduate students receive far more supervised clinical experience than when early licensure laws were enacted. In fact, many students already have a year or more of supervised experience *before* they leave on internship, with internship then constituting a second year, all before they receive their doctorates.

Still, why change the way licensure is done? Current licensure law, including that in Ohio, is now having an **unintended adverse effect** – it is interfering with access to psychological services by unnecessarily delaying licensure of well-trained doctors of psychology. It happens as follows. Dr. Grayson graduates from Ohio University. She must now obtain 1,800 hours – one year – of supervised experience in order to become Dr. Grayson, psychologist – that is Ohio's law. However, each place Dr. Grayson looks for post-doctoral hours tells her that, unfortunately, they need to hire someone who is licensed, not an unlicensed post-doc, because insurance companies will not reimburse her work as an unlicensed person. The problem, of course – this is the Catch 22 which Dr.

Grayson and her newly graduated colleagues will be facing – is that she can only be licensed by getting post-doctoral hours, but she needs to *be* licensed in order to get those hours. The result is that people who are seeking psychological services, particularly in underserved areas, are denied access to well trained people on the basis of what is essentially a technicality. As Ms. Grayson put it in her testimony, it would be ironic if she were forbidden to provide clinical services that she is *already providing* when she gets her doctorate. Addressing that Catch 22 technicality is why APA changed its policy and why the Ohio Psychological Association asked Representatives Peterson and Letson to introduce HB503.

Psychology licensure is a state jurisdictional matter, and OPA has worked closely with the Ohio Psychology Board and training directors in Ohio; Am. HB503 has the support of both.

What are the provisions of Am. HB503? What would change if it is enacted?

Am. HB 503, first of all, would **remove the Catch 22** by recognizing the extent of supervised clinical experience that graduate students receive before they go on internship and would make students license eligible at the point they have completed the required 2 years of supervised clinical experience.

Next, and this was a recommendation of Ohio's licensing board, Am. HB503 would ensure, after a significant grandfathering period, that applicants **meet a minimum standard of academic preparation**, so that graduating from a program accredited by the APA, the Canadian Psychological Association, or the National Association of School Psychologists, or designated by the National Register and the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, would be a requirement for licensure.

Finally, Am. HB503 would **provide some means of reciprocity** for psychologists who come to Ohio licensed in other states.

In brief,

- Am. HB503 would **not reduce the amount of training or supervised experience** needed for licensure; it would only change the timing or sequence of training.
- Am. HB503 would **align licensure requirements with most other jurisdictions.**
- Am. HB503 would **increase access to psychological services.**

On behalf of the Ohio Psychological Association and the citizens of Ohio who may be helped by psychologists, I ask you to support Am. HB503 as currently written, without further amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to address any questions that you or the Committee might have.