

February 27, 2017

Representative Debra Kiel
537 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Representative Kiel:

As representatives of higher education faculty and institutions across the state, we are writing in strong support of HF 1282 and specifically the language that provides a clear exemption from licensing requirements of the Board of Psychology for college professors who simply are teaching and doing research in psychology.

The Psychology Practice Act is designed to provide oversight to psychology professionals providing clinical health care services, so that the public welfare is protected. It was not intended to require licensure for professors who are **not** engaged in providing clinical services.

We strongly support amending the Psychology Practice Act to include a clear exemption with this language:

Nothing in sections 148.88 to 148.98 shall be construed to prevent a person employed in a secondary, postsecondary, or graduate institution from teaching and conducting research in psychology within an educational institution that is recognized by a regional accrediting organization or by a federal, state, county, or local government institution, agency, or research facility, so long as:(1) the institution, agency, or facility provides appropriate oversight mechanisms to ensure public protections; and(2) the person is not providing direct clinical services to a client or clients as defined in sections 148.88 to 148.98.

This language would not change the current and longstanding practice of the Board of Psychology in this area. Historically, the Board has not applied licensing requirements to professors who are teaching and conducting research but not practicing clinical psychology in a clinical setting.

However, there have been a few recent cases involving professors that have raised questions about how the Minnesota Board of Psychology should interpret, apply and enforce the state statute that defines and governs the practice of psychology and licensure of college professors. In working with the Board, all parties have agreed that the statute needs clarification to continue to ensure that the Board does not have jurisdiction over professors unless they are involved in clinical work.

Today, the vast majority of college-level psychology teaching faculty are not licensed psychologists. Given the shortage of mental health practitioners across our state, it would be a waste of critical resources for the Board of Psychology to spend time and resources licensing professors who do not see patients. It would be a severe overreach to require all academicians teaching in this area of study at all colleges to hold licenses. It would be a waste of state and individual resources and it would not be in accordance with how faculty members across the country are treated by any other state's licensure boards.

Thank you for your support for HF 1282. We look forward to working with you to ensure that this exemption becomes law. If you have any questions, please contact Christine Kiel (ckiel@umn.edu) at the University of Minnesota or Amy McDonough (amcdonough@mnprivatecolleges.org) at the Minnesota Private College Council.

Sincerely,



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Paul Cerkvénik
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Mark Carlson
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