

APR 25 2018

April 23, 2018

Dear Distinguished Members of the Sunset Commission,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

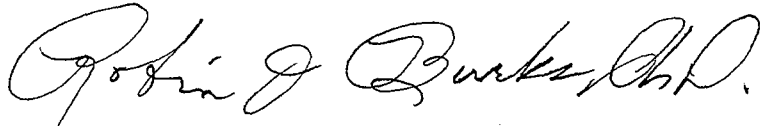
My name is Dr. Robin Burks and I have been a licensed psychologist practicing independently in the state of Texas for nearly 30 years. I am the immediate past president of the Houston Psychological Association and have served on HPA's board for the past six years and also currently serve on the Texas Psychological Association's Political Action Committee's Board.

I am adamantly opposed to consolidating TSBEP under an umbrella agency, Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council. The LPC's, MSW's and LMFT's may have reason to prefer the new model as compared to their current one due to the inefficiencies and other key problems those boards have. The TSBEP, on the other hand, was found to be operating very efficiently, as has been the case for many years. The BHEC model actually puts TSBEP's efficiency at risk and would likely put Texas on the same path that the New Hampshire psychology board was on where challenging practice conditions created by the omnibus board made it difficult to attract psychologists to practice in New Hampshire. So in 2012, the state legislature reinstated the independent New Hampshire psychology board. In fact, other than Kansas, all of the handful of state psychology boards who tried consolidation ended up reinstating independent boards after consolidation due to their problematic nature, and Kansas already has problems such as delays in handling complaints.

A consolidated psychology board simply can't provide the public with the level of protection that an independent one does. And since TSBEP is self-sustaining through licensing fees, the independent model saves the state money while the Sunset Staff report from the 85<sup>th</sup> legislative session predicted the cost of consolidation to be \$1 million over 5 years.

The small size of the TSBEP allows it to be nimble and responsive. And if antitrust were truly the commission's highest priority, then consolidation would have been recommended for the Chiropractor Board, which the commission did not, in fact, recommend.

I strongly urge the Sunset Commission to allow licensed psychologists, such as myself to continue to set an example of the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and excellent patient care while maintaining TSBEP's independent agency status and fantastic track record of protecting vulnerable Texans. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin J. Burks, Ph.D.".

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