

Frances Douglas

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The Sunset Advisory Commission's staff report noted the following:

1. The Board's Oral Examination is an Unnecessary Requirement for Licensure
2. Requiring a Year of Post-Doctoral Supervision is an Unnecessary Hurdle to Licensure, Potentially Contributing to the Mental Health Care Provider Shortage in Texas
3. Key Elements of the Board's Licensing and Regulatory Functions Do Not Conform to Common Licensing Standards
4. Texas Should Continue Regulating Psychologists, but Decisions on the Structure of the Texas State board of Examiners of Psychologists Await Further Review
5. A Recent Court Decision Opens the Door to unlicensed Practice of Psychology

I will comment on the above issues prioritized as important to me. I am in agreement with Issue # 3 and will not address it in my comments.

Regarding Issue #4, I believe that Psychology should maintain an independent board.

Regarding Issue # 1, I believe that passing the Oral Examination should continue to be a licensing requirement for Psychologists in Texas.

Regarding Issue # 2, I believe the completion of a supervised post-doctoral year should continue to be a licensing requirement for Psychologists in Texas.

Regarding Issue #5, I believe it is vitally important to have a new definition for psychology and that definition must include that licensed psychologists diagnose.

Others have already provided you with testimony citing data to support the positions that I hold on these issues. I wholeheartedly agree with the previous testimony. Rather than restate what others have said, I would like to add my personal reasons for asking to speak with you today.

I began my career in the mental health field with a masters degree in counseling. Over a period of 7 years working in mental health, I became aware that there was so much that I didn't know and I looked to the psychologists working with me for guidance. This experience led to my desire to return to school and pursue a doctorate in psychology.

After 26 years as a licensed psychologist, I am still aware that there is so much I don't know. But my training as a psychologist tells me that there is a body of knowledge available to me to look for answers and there are other psychologists available for consultation and guidance to help me provide the very best possible care to the clients that I serve. This is the basis of training as a psychologist. A psychologist will integrate research findings, clinical experience and consultation with others with expertise to provide the very best service to individuals, families, groups or anyone seeking their service or consultation. Psychologists maintain an ongoing search for the very best in treatment and intervention practices that doesn't end with graduation from a doctoral program.

The current independent board, the Oral Examination, and the Post-doctoral year of supervision exist to maintain the standards for the profession of psychology so that Texas Psychologists provide the highest quality of service that the citizens of Texas deserve. I strongly urge you to maintain these standards.

Finally, the definition for psychology must acknowledge that the work of psychology includes diagnosis. Psychologists diagnose in order to develop treatment plans and recommendations. Other mental health disciplines look to psychology for assistance in diagnosis.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input into this important process.