

Charlotte Parrott

Sunset Advisory Commission
December 8, 2016

Testimony regarding the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
Charlotte E. Parrott, Ph.D., License #36213, Houston, TX

Mr. Chair and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today regarding the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. I am a licensed psychologist in private practice in Houston and I use evidence-based therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, to treat adults with a variety of mental health issues. I also conduct assessments to assess cognitive functioning and diagnose mental health conditions.

First, I would like to address Issue #4 from the staff report. I strongly believe that the TSBEP should remain an independent board. Our independent board currently operates in an efficient and effective manner that not only meets our needs as licensees, but also provides important oversight that protects the public. Our board understands our different specialties, as well as the many services that we provide and the many populations we serve. This knowledge allows the board to intelligently evaluate and respond to complaints against our licensees, ensuring that our profession adheres to our high professional and ethical standards. If our independent board were dissolved and transitioned to an advisory board with larger agency oversight, we might lose that knowledge and efficiency, which may put the public at risk.

Next, I would like to comment on issues #1 and #2 from the staff report. I believe that the Oral Examination and Postdoctoral Year protect the public and ensure that psychologists are adequately trained and competent. I believe that removing these requirements would cut corners in our training and create risk for the public.

As a psychologist in private practice, I am grateful for the breadth and depth of my training, which included years of classroom coursework as well as thousands of hours of direct client contact and supervision. Preparing for the oral exam forced me to master and synthesize the six years of education and training I received in my doctoral program. In private practice, I not only strive to support and help my clients, but I also need to simultaneously assess for dangerous behaviors or risk factors that might harm my client or someone else. Going through the Oral Examination process ensured that I not only knew the material in text books, but I knew how to *think* through a situation that could mean life or death in the real world.

Regarding the Postdoctoral Year, I spent my postdoctoral year at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where I received in-depth training and supervision in two different evidence-based therapies. This level of instruction and mentorship were experiences that I could not have obtained through a single lecture or weekend crash course. My postdoctoral year also allowed me to develop a sense of professional autonomy and refine my clinical decision-making skills, while still working in a supervised environment. The skills and confidence I gained during this year enable me to do the work I do today.

Psychologists are doctoral-level professionals with high standards for competency and ethical conduct. As a field, we have multiple subspecialties and work with at-risk and sensitive populations. Given the work we do, it is critically important that we are not only highly-trained but also well-supported and properly overseen by our licensing board.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I welcome any questions at this time.