

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Janet Wood](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 16, 2016 8:13:25 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2016 6:58 AM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS STATE BOARD EXAMINERS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

First Name: Kate

Last Name: Walker

Title: Practice owner

Organization you are affiliated with: Past-president and current LPC Board Liaison for the Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

Email: [kwalker@achievebalance.org](mailto:kwalker@achievebalance.org)

City: The Woodlands

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

Your report based on observing the licensing boards and interviewing key personnel has identified major concerns and created an avenue for positive change. I am a licensed professional counselor, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a supervisor for both licenses, and a continuing education provider for LPC, LMFT, and social workers. I have served as president of TACES (the Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision) and I currently attend LPC board meetings as the TACES board liaison. I am the Director of Clinical Field Experience at the University of Houston Victoria/Katy campus, I own Kate Walker Training which offers the forty-hour LPC/LMFT Supervisor training, and I own and operate two counseling practices - [achievebalance.org](http://achievebalance.org) and a non-profit Ann's Place in The Woodlands, Texas.

I oppose the recommendation to relegate the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors and the other mental health professional licensing boards to advisory status under the over-extended Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). Here is what I urge the committee to consider:

1. Our board (as well as the other boards under review) have been severely underfunded. This has resulted in inadequate staffing that has affected investigations, licensing, and disciplinary actions. Issues #2 and #3 of your report would be moot had the Texas Department of State Health Services allocated funds generated by licensing fees to support the regulatory functions of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors as well as the boards that regulate Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Social Workers.
2. A move to TDLR will not resolve access to care or regulatory challenges. None of the occupations regulated by TDLR work with fragile individuals struggling to overcome devastating psycho, social, emotional and physical challenges. Expanding the scope of TDLR beyond its mission is likely to adversely impact consumer protection across all the industries it regulates and risk its efficiency.
3. Best practice to protect consumers is to have Independent, professionally

specialized boards with public members that regulate mental health care. Our requirements for licensure now reflect national standards. Setting and enforcing clear, ethical training and practice standards for mental health professionals can only be accomplished by professionally specialized and independent licensing boards. Thank you for your work compiling your report. I am happy to have the opportunity to comment.

- Kate Walker Ph.D., LPC-S, LMFT-S

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

Retain the structure and autonomy of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors as well as the TSBEMFT and the TSBESW

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree