

LYNN B. HERMAN, MEMBER

HOUSE BOX 202020
MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 787-8594

301 S. ALLEN STREET
ALLENWAY BLDG. / SUITE 102
STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801
PHONE: (814) 238-5477

130 N. FRONT STREET
PHILIPSBURG, PA 16866
PHONE: (814) 342-5411



House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

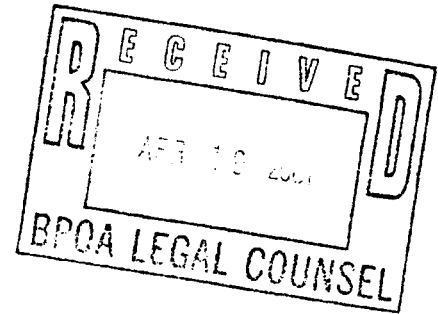
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ORIGINAL: 2178

April 17, 2001

Ms. Eva Cheney, Counsel
State Board of Social Workers, Marriage
and Family Therapists and Professional
Counselors
P.O. Box 2649
116 Pine Street
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649



Dear Ms. Cheney:

It has been brought to my attention that Act 136 which provides for the Professional Counselor Licensing Bill is currently listed on the Pennsylvania Bulletin for public comment, and I am writing you regarding this matter.

The first area of concern that has been raised is that the Act in its current form will not accept Certified Addiction Counselors at the Master's level for licensing. The Act will not accept the national exam that is taken for certification and administered by the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium which is utilized by this State's Certification Board. This exam is utilized by other states and internationally as a controlled means to identify individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to practice as an Addiction Counselor. This includes states that license individuals in this professional field.

Secondly, the Master Addiction Counselor examination and certification confirmed by the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) is also not accepted. Both of these exams are accepted by the Federal government as acceptable levels of achievement to practice Drug and Alcohol treatment in accordance with Federal Department of Transportation guidelines.

Thirdly, the Act restricts which colleges and universities will be acceptable institutions from which one's degree will be recognized. Two universities not currently accepted are Lincoln University and The Pennsylvania State University. By excluding Lincoln University they will be excluding a majority of the minority counselors currently certified in the field. It is also unacceptable that the Counseling Education Masters with an emphasis in Chemical Dependency from Penn State does not qualify. This is one of the state's premier educational institutions.

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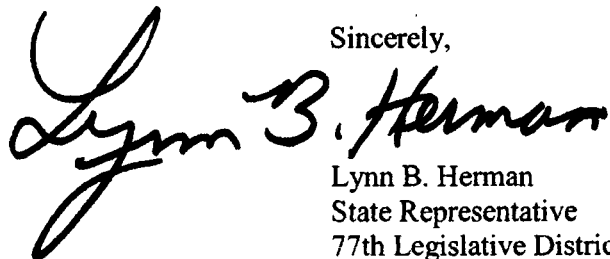
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LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION
STATE HOUSE
HARRISBURG, PA 17103

These issues can be resolved by having the Act amended during the open comment period. The Act should be amended to include the following:

- Inclusion under the grandparenting regulations of individuals in possession of a Master's Degree and Certification as an Addiction Counselor (CAC).
- Inclusion under the grandparenting regulations of individuals in possession of a Master's Degree and Certification as a Master Addiction Counselor from NAADAC (MAC).
- Inclusion under grandparenting regulations of the IC&RC national exam for addiction counselors as an acceptable exam.
- Inclusion under grandparenting regulations of the NAADAC national exam for Masters Addiction Counselors as an acceptable exam.
- Inclusion under grandparenting regulations of individuals in possession of the Master's Degree in Human Services provided by Lincoln University.
- Inclusion under grandparenting regulations of individuals in possession of the Master's Degree in Counseling Education with an emphasis in Chemical Dependency from The Pennsylvania State University.

It is imperative that all the residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania would have the appropriately trained professionals needed to provide Substance Abuse Treatment. For the reasons I have enumerated, I urge you to adopt the recommendations previously stated to Act 136.

Should you need any additional information regarding this matter, or if I can be of assistance in any way, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Lynn B. Herman
State Representative
77th Legislative District

LBH/lls