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TESTIMONY
SB 386 – 2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

MAX L. FOSTER JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES REGULATORY BOARD

Good Morning Madam Chairperson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee. I am Max Foster, Executive Director of the Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB) and I am here today to provide information to the Committee regarding our support of SB 386.

The BSRB currently licenses 13,052 individuals in the following mental health professions: Psychologists, Professional Counselors, Social Workers, Addiction Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Masters Level Psychologists, and Behavior Analysts. Specifically, the language in SB 386 amends the educational requirement for licensure as a Professional Counselor with our agency.

Currently, one of the requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor with our board is the completion of 60 graduate semester hours including a graduate degree in Counseling from a college or university approved by the board which includes 45 graduate semester hours distributed among various subject matter areas.

SB 386 amends the educational requirement for licensure as a Professional Counselor to include the completion of 60 graduate semester hours including a graduate degree in Counseling **or a related field** from a college or university approved by the board which includes 45 graduate semester hours of **counseling coursework** distributed among various subject matter areas.

It is important to emphasize that the language in SB 386 does not change the content of the educational subject matter areas that are currently required in order to be licensed as a Professional Counselor with this agency. If passed, SB 386 will allow individuals who meet the educational subject matter areas currently required – but who have a degree in a field related to Counseling to be able to be licensed by the BSRB.

Our previous experience has been that it is not unusual for our agency to receive applications for licensure as a Professional Counselor from individuals who have taken the required coursework that meets our statutes – but they cannot be licensed as a Professional Counselor because their degree does not contain the word counseling.

In summary, the BSRB believes the language in SB 386 provides a vehicle for more individuals to become licensed as Professional Counselors in Kansas without sacrificing the integrity of the current licensing statutes.

Madam Chairperson and Committee members this concludes my remarks. At this time I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Thanks for the opportunity to address the Committee.