



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: February 10, 2016
To: Assembly Committee on Health
Fr: Senator Sheila Harsdorf
Re: Assembly Bill 483- Eliminating the prevention specialist-in-training requirement

Dear Chair Sanfelippo and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 483 (AB 483), which would eliminate the prevention specialist-in-training requirement. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this proposal.

The Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) licenses substance abuse professionals, among them Prevention Specialists and Prevention Specialists-In-Training. These are highly trained individuals who work in various school and community settings to provide education and other drug and alcohol prevention services.

Under current law, anyone wishing to become a licensed Prevention Specialist must fulfill certain criteria relating to experience and education, pay a fee, and pass an examination approved by the Department. The other prerequisite is to hold a Prevention Specialist In-Training license for one year.

This bill would eliminate the Prevention Specialist-In-Training license, and allow individuals in this profession to apply immediately to become a Prevention Specialist. It would maintain the current criteria for becoming a Prevention Specialist, removing only the requirement that one obtain the In-Training designation first. Individuals currently holding the Prevention Specialist-In-Training license will be able to apply right away for the full Prevention Specialist license.

This simple bill was requested by a constituent who views the Prevention Specialist-In-Training license as an unnecessary regulatory burden. Candidates can be effectively judged on their experience and knowledge through the criteria for the Prevention Specialist license. Removing this requirement may encourage more individuals to pursue work in substance abuse prevention fields, a critical resource in maintaining healthy communities in our state. I want to emphasize that Prevention Specialists do not provide medical or counseling services, but serve as public health educators to help individuals maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle.

I urge your support of this legislation that would help eliminate unnecessary regulation that delays qualified individuals from obtaining licensure to help our communities with drug and alcohol prevention efforts.