

June 16, 2020

Dear Chairman McColley and members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of S.B. 238. Art Therapy is an integrative mental health and human services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship.

Art therapy, facilitated by a professional art therapist, effectively supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as community concerns. It is used to improve cognitive and sensorimotor functions, foster self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivate emotional resilience, promote insight, enhance social skills, reduce and resolve conflicts and distress, and advance societal and ecological change.

Art therapists are master-level clinicians who work with people of all ages across a broad spectrum of practice. Guided by ethical standards and scope of practice, their education and supervised training prepares them for culturally proficient work with diverse populations in a variety of settings. Honoring individuals' values and beliefs, art therapists work with people who are challenged with medical and mental health problems, as well as individuals seeking emotional, creative, and spiritual growth.

Through integrative methods, art therapy engages the mind, body, and spirit in ways that are distinct from verbal articulation alone. Kinesthetic, sensory, perceptual, and symbolic opportunities invite alternative modes of receptive and expressive communication, which can circumvent the limitations of language. Visual and symbolic expression gives voice to experience, and empowers individual, communal, and societal transformation.

At the Women's Recovery Center, an outpatient substance abuse agency for women, we have heavily utilized art therapy as a part of our programming. The women we treat find art therapy to be instrumental to their drug and alcohol addiction treatment. We fully support this initiative for art therapy licensure in Ohio as it should be valued as an effective treatment for our patients, comparable to other therapies offered in our programming.

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Licensure of Art Therapy in Ohio would protect the public by providing a standard of care and discourage malpractice by holding bad actors accountable. It would also improve job opportunities for art therapists who live in Ohio but work in Kentucky or Pennsylvania where professional Art Therapy is already licensed.

It is our hope that you will take all these factors into mind and think about how art therapy can help those needing better access to mental health treatment in your own districts. Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 238 and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ashely Yassall  
Executive Director, Women's Recovery Center

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