



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL AFFAIRS
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July 14, 2008

The Honorable P. Michael Sturla
Majority Chairman
House Professional Licensure Committee
PA House of Representatives
333 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2096

Dear Chairman Sturla:

Thank you for the invitation to comment on House Bill 2137 and House Bill 2138. The two bills, if enacted, will require the licensure of genetic counselors under the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. The Department of State is submitting this letter of support for these two pieces of legislation.

It is important that the citizens of the Commonwealth have access to the services of highly trained genetic counselors. The successful Genome Project that mapped the DNA of the human body resulted in a myriad of tests being made available to healthcare professionals. Due to the technical nature of these tests, it is imperative that highly trained genetic counselors become regulated as part of a team of healthcare providers who are assisting and helping patients and physicians by analyzing pertinent genetic information. Moreover, these genetic counselors need to be regulated so that patients who use these services will have confidence in the information that they receive. Genetic counselors can explain this information to the patients in plain English and simple terms which are readily understandable so that life-saving decisions can be intelligently made. For these reasons, the Rendell Administration supports the regulation of genetic counselors.

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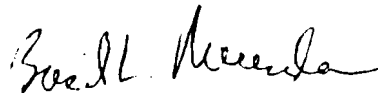
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The State Board of Medicine and the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine can properly exercise oversight of this profession because of the estimated small number of genetic counselors currently located in the Commonwealth. Consistent with the mission of the Department of State, regulation of this group would ensure the citizens of the Commonwealth that genetic counselors have met certain minimum competency levels and maintained appropriate standards of knowledge and skill.

Again thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation. Please feel free to contact me at 717-783-7192 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Basil L. Merenda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Basil" being the most prominent.

Basil L. Merenda
Commissioner

CC: The Honorable William F. Adolph Jr., Minority Chairman, House Professional Licensure Committee