

which is the higher level and says unless you are licensed, unless you meet that standard, you cannot perform this scope of practice, you cannot perform this function, and, essentially, that's what we are taking these areas up to. We are going from that mid-level of saying you get this title and you can do it but others cannot, to saying we are now taking you up one step and you must be a professional counselor, you must be a certified social worker, or else you can't be performing these functions, unless, and I emphasize the unless, you have the exemptions that are listed out starting on pages 37 and 38. And so it will allow for us, who are concerned about some individuals out there dealing in mental health activities that may not have training and may be causing some harm to individuals but nothing can be done about the situation because they are free and able to do that, that won't be the case in the future. So this is no small change. It is a major change but it did start in review in '89, it did lead to a 407 review, all through the process what seemed impossible has come together. I commend Senator Bernard-Stevens because he had greater hopes than I did that we'd ultimately see some successful consensus on this. Having been around the issue as long as I have and seeing these groups not get along very well from time to time, having all three sit down and finally agree to a compromise as they have under this bill is really a rather major achievement. So I'm very pleased that we were able to reach this point and have this bill before you, and I think we are in a position that I feel comfortable with in moving forward. But I want to acknowledge also that having been through this before with social workers and counselors and knowing that there's a broad interest in this type of activity, there will be problems, and I am going to warn you of that right now because when we went through it with the others we did have to come in with follow-up legislation to clarify and deal with concerns that came up, and the thing I would emphasize here to all of you on the floor, and for the future in terms of record on the bill is that our intent is clear, that we are trying to take some control of this area, and head off problems with some individuals, but I think we are flexible in how we achieve that, we've got some exemptions in here, and if there are problems that result in the future, we can adjust. We can make change and I think we can achieve the ultimate goal of protecting the public and providing access to qualified quality mental health practitioners. So...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.