

April 2010

Dear Legislators in Wisconsin;

I am an herbalist from Ohio who is involved an effort to pass legislation to counter the effects of the Dietitians Bill that was passed in Ohio in the 80's. **It has created a witch hunt here that hangs over many small businesses that create jobs, and provide less-expensive, safe alternatives**, and tons of education to the public about how to stay well and save money on health care costs.

In Ohio, since 2005, the dietetics board has taken action against 114 unlicensed people, including herbalists, supplement sales, fitness & personal trainers, clinical nutritionists, wellness centers, weight loss businesses, and other licensed professionals. That's on average 23 per year. They have been active since 1987, but we are only quoting stats for the last five years.

This is usually started with a warning letter stating that a complaint has been filed. It turns out there is not a complaint from a client. It is only that the dietetics board caught them advertising "nutritional counseling". **The person targeted spends legal fees, with one person spending \$30,000 defending herself twice.**

The Ohio Dietitians have interpreted the law to mean they own all rights to discuss the relationship between an individual's food intake and their health, and that no one else, even if they AGREE, is allowed to speak about diet. Doctors must even have them on staff to discuss diet with patients.

What a strange dilemma. With national attention on childhood obesity, we in Ohio are threatened by law for talking with a child about his/her food choices, as well as all the obese adults. We are not allowed to discuss with anyone the mountains of literature that moves the body of nutritional information forward. The Dietitians still enforce the dissemination of outdated information.

In Ohio, since the inception of the Dietetics board in July, 1987, action has been initiated to pass a Health Freedom Bill to counter the effects of this bill. Our consumers, looking for alternatives, are blocked from finding them because of the fear of advertising. Do we not have a right as individuals to the right to well being, and the freedom of choice in how to achieve it?

Passing a dietitians' bill creates a monopoly for a small group of people where there is no just cause for them to have that monopoly. No one has proven that people are harmed by an open discussion of dietary research. Why would we need to have this topic removed from the public domain?

Do not allow Ohio's witch hunt to spread to Wisconsin. Please kill this bill, which arbitrarily awards one group of people exclusive rights to a discussion which should be encouraged in the public domain. The only reason to remove information from the public domain is if there is inherent harm in that information. We have all been eating food for many years. We eat for many reasons. We put hours into planning meals, and special events as individuals. Dietitians' jobs are actually in the area of meal planning for institutions. Let them do that. They do not believe in the use of supplements. Please do not give them jurisdiction over someone else's choice of whether or not to use them, or ask someone for advice about them. Protect the consumer's right to a free and educated choice concerning his/her own well-being, and the rights of all of us to free speech.

Sincerely,

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