



PROFESSIONAL
CERTIFICATION
COALITION

April 3, 2026

Representative William Vaughan, Chair
House Committee on Commerce
Cordell Hull Building
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.
Suite 622
Nashville, TN 37243
rep.kevin.vaughan@capitol.tn.gov

Re: HB 470

Dear Representative Vaughan,

The Professional Certification Coalition (PCC)¹ writes regarding HB 470. As drafted, the bill would waste taxpayer dollars and endanger the health, safety, and welfare of Tennessee citizens who trust the state to protect them. **For these reasons, the PCC opposes HB 470.**

As a threshold matter, legislation to authorize private suits against unconstitutional regulations is unnecessary—any person who practices a profession can already bring First Amendment challenges to professional regulations. However, the bill goes beyond that to take the position that the exercise of religious beliefs and free speech should, in some circumstances, override certain rules and procedures of licensing authorities. What’s more, the legislation confers standing not only on individuals who have allegedly been harmed in violation of the law, but also on those who are “substantially likely to be harmed.” This invites premature, theoretical claims that will burden the legal system and divert resources from protecting public health and safety.

The legislation prohibits adverse action on the basis of one’s refusal to “affirm a statement or oath that is contrary to the individual’s sincerely held religious beliefs or moral convictions,” effectively allowing licensees to withhold certain advice or services to a Tennessee citizen, even if it is in the citizen’s best interests to receive such advice or services. While certain provisions require that services related to the expression of one’s religious beliefs or moral convictions meet

¹ The PCC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association formed to address legislation that affects professional certification programs, those who hold private certification credentials, and the many constituencies that rely on professional certification. The PCC’s organizational members include non-governmental professional certification organizations, professional societies, and service providers. The PCC’s members reflect a wide spectrum of professions, including health care, engineering, financial services, and information technology, among many others. Our founding organizations – the American Society of Association Executives (the leading organization for association management) and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (the leading developer of accreditation standards for professional certification programs) – govern the PCC.

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the “standard of care or practice for that profession,” this “standard of care” is undefined in the bill. The vagueness and narrow carveout exposes Tennessee residents to abuse and harm.

The true effect of HB 470 is to incentivize litigation against state and government employees by offering the prospect of attorney’s fees and damages, wasting taxpayer money in having to defend against a spate of likely meritless suits. The legislation’s breadth and vagueness results in an expansive grant of standing and means that virtually anyone who is disciplined—or who fears discipline—can claim grounds to sue a licensing agency. The bill does not include any industry-specific exceptions, which means, for example, that officials of the Tennessee medical boards would be subject to suit, that Tennessee would incur litigation expenses even for frivolous claims, and that the medical board officials would regularly have to justify in court that medical licensing is necessary to protect public health.

An occupational license conveys the state’s endorsement that a licensee is fit to practice the profession without jeopardizing public health, safety, and welfare. **Licensing boards must be able to make decisions that hold applicants and current licensees to consistent eligibility and disciplinary standards**, regardless of whether the applicant or licensee contends the license denial or disciplinary action involved in the exercise of a First Amendment right.

The PCC stands ready to work with lawmakers who seek to craft legislation that strikes a reasonable balance between occupational licensing and individual rights. Unfortunately, this legislation goes too far in limiting the decision-making authority of licensing boards, thus undermining the safeguards that protect public health and safety.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. Please feel free to reach out to us using the contact information identified below.

Sincerely,



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AABC Commissioning Group
ABRET Neurodiagnostic
Credentialing & Accreditation
(ABRET)
ABSA International: the
Association for Biosafety and
Biosecurity (ABSA)
Academy for Certification of
Vision Rehabilitation &
Education Professionals
(ACVREP)
American Association of
Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)
American Board for
Certification in Orthotics,
Prosthetics and Pedorthics
(ABCOP)
American Board of Certification
for Gastroenterology Nurses
(ABCGN)
American Board of Foot and
Ankle Surgery (ABFAS)
American Board of
Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN)
American Board of Nursing
Specialties (ABNS)
American Medical Certification
Association (AMCA)
American Nurses Credentialing
Center (ANCC)
American Payroll Association
(APA)
American Registry of
Radiologic Technologists
(ARRT)
American Society of
Association Executives (ASAE)
American Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (ASHA)
American Traffic Safety
Services Association (ATSSA)

American Translators
Association (ATA)
Arcitura Education, Inc.
Association for Financial
Counseling & Planning
Education (AFCPE)
Association of Surgical
Technologists (AST)
Behavior Analyst Certification
Board (BACB)
Beingcert
Board of Certified Safety
Professionals (BCSP)
Board of Pharmacy Specialties
(BPS)
Building Commissioning
Certification Board (BCCB)
Building Industry Consulting
Service International, Inc.
(BICSI)
Certification Board for Diabetes
Care and Education (CBDCE)
Certification Board for Music
Therapists (CBMT)
Certification Council for
Professional Dog Trainers
(CCPDT)
Certified Financial Planner
Board of Standards (CFP Board)
Certified Fund Raising
Executive International (CFRE)
Chartered Financial Analyst
Institute (CFA Institute)
Commission for Case Manager
Certification (CCMC)
Community Association
Institute (CAI)
Competency & Credentialing
Institute (CCI)

Construction Management
Association of America
(CMAA)
Council of Engineering and
Scientific Specialty Boards
(CESB)
Dental Assisting National Board
(DANB)
Diving Equipment and
Marketing Association (DEMA)
Entertainment Services and
Technology Association (ESTA)
ETA International
Financial Planning Association
(FPA)
Healthcare Sterile Processing
Association (HSPA)
Hearth, Patio, & Barbecue
Education Foundation (HPBA)
Hospice and Palliative
Credentialing Center (HPCC)
Human Resource Certification
Institute, Inc. (HRCI)
Institute for Credentialing
Excellence (ICE)
Institute of Hazardous Materials
Management (IHMM)
International Coach Federation
(ICF)
International Information
System Security Certification
Consortium (ISC²)
Irrigation Association
IT Certification Council (ITCC)
Laborers' International Union of
North America Training &
Education Fund (LIUNA)
Medical-Surgical Nursing
Certification Board (MSNCB)
NALA – The Paralegal
Association

National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA)

National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification, Inc. (NATA/BOC)

National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA)

National Board of Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences (NBC-HIS)

National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)

National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)

National Certification Board for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (NCBAHM)

National Certification Corporation (NCC)

National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC)

National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)

National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA)

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

National Restaurant Association (NRA)

National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)

Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission (NNCC)

Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC)

Pearson Vue

Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB)

Last updated April 3, 2026

Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH)

Project Management Institute (PMI)

PSI Services

QualityPro

Rehabilitation Nursing Certification Board (RNCB)

School Nutrition Association (SNA)

SeaCrest Consulting

Security Industry Association (SIA)

Society of Broadcast Engineers (SBE)

Specialty Pharmacy Certification Board (SPCB)

Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA)

Towing and Recovery Association of America, Inc. (TRA)