



## Regulation's secret weapon: passion

*What it takes to be an engaged, informed, active, meaningful regulator*

This session was a mini-version of a New Board Member Training session hosted by ASWB and facilitated by Dale Atkinson, ASWB legal counsel. At ASWB's Spring Education Meeting, this presentation was a wake-up call to many of the regulators who had not attended the full training session.

Knowledge, said Atkinson, is what sparks passion. And "it is your passion that fuels regulation and exemplifies the essential public protection mission." Essential to that idea is for social work board members to take off their social work hat, leave personal agendas at the door, and put on the public protection hat of the regulator.

During the session, Atkinson posed the following key questions:

**Why must we become passionate about regulation?** Because passion, Atkinson explained, drives action. The public doesn't step up and ask for more regulation, so it is up to regulators and others to take action, to become better informed to make better decisions so the public can be properly protected.

**Is regulation needed?** Said Atkinson, "We don't see an outcry for regulation. We see, instead, push back. 'Why do we regulate cable TV installers? What the heck is that all about?' People can make fun of that and attract a

little bit of attention. Yet as soon as we have somebody going into your home—you're in there alone, the person has not been vetted and they've been convicted of felonies or what-have-you—well, now we have a whole different perspective, a whole different outlook. That's why we have regulation. Of course it's needed."

**What can be done?** Regulation is not understood by consumers, licensees, and politicians, he said. Being passionate about regulation is the start of a solution. Using and sharing knowledge about emerging programs can help spread the word. "The ASWB Path to Licensure program is awesome. We need to get the word out to people who are coming into the profession, why there's a board and how important it can be. And get them to passionately embrace regulation and licensure and why it exists. We cannot lose sight of the public protection mission," he said.

Throughout the presentation, Atkinson thanked the participants for doing a difficult and often thankless job serving as board regulators, urging them to also passionately embrace roles as leaders in regulation awareness.

To illustrate how varied the world of regulation can be, he asked board members from the United States and Canada to



Dale Atkinson, ASWB legal counsel

share information about their particular board and their role in the organization. Topics included board structure, hours spent on board business, policies, how boards conduct business, their constituents, application processing, and qualifications to serve on the boards. Also discussed was the role of the government in the board's day-to-day business.

Atkinson dove deep into the emotions and commitment behind today's regulatory needs and initiatives. His 90-minute presentation helped to build the knowledge of the attendees and inspire a heightened passion about regulation and the important role each board member plays.

DVDs of the Spring Education Meeting can be ordered at no cost. Send your request to [info@aswb.org](mailto:info@aswb.org). For more information about New Board Member Training, visit <http://www.aswb.org/members/board-member-training/>.