

SUSAN K. MCCOMAS  
Legislative District 34B  
Harford County

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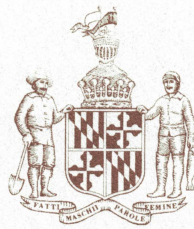
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## *The Maryland House of Delegates*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

*Annapolis Office*  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 323  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3272 · 301-858-3272  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3272  
Fax: 410-841-3202 · 301-858-3202  
Susan.McComas@house.state.md.us

*District Office*  
P. O. Box 1204  
9 West Courtland Street  
Suite 100  
Bel Air, Maryland 21014  
410-836-9449 · 410-838-5187  
Fax 410-838-5768

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1177

This bill authorizes a licensed certified social worker-clinical (LCSW-C) who is licensed under the Maryland Social Workers Practice Act and qualified as an expert witness to testify on ultimate issues, including insanity, competency to stand trial, and matters within the scope of the social worker's special knowledge, in any court or administrative hearing.

By passing HB 1177, we are codifying what has already been determined by the Court of Appeals of Maryland in 2010 in the reported opinion by Judge Battaglia. In the case known as *In Re Adoption/Guardianship of Tatianna B.*, the Court of Appeals recognized that Section 19-101(f) of the Health and Occupations Article defined the practice of clinical social work as, *inter alia*, "rendering a diagnosis based on a recognized manual of mental and emotional disorders." It went on to affirm that a "licensed clinical social worker is specifically authorized by the Legislature to render diagnoses based on a recognized manual of mental and emotional disorders." Summing it up, the Court stated that it is clear from the "plain statutory language that the Legislature deems licensed certified social worker - clinical capable of rendering diagnoses such as those made by the [licensed clinical social worker at trial.]" In conclusion, the Court held that "there is nothing that bars a LCSW-C from expressing an opinion as to the existence of a mental disorder based on a recognized manual" as the licensed clinical social worker has extensive education and experience in the field, from which a trial court could properly conclude that they are qualified to testify as experts.

HB 1177 is merely the statutory rendering of what is already been decided by the highest court in the State of Maryland.