



## CEDAR RIDGE CHILDREN'S HOME & SCHOOL, INC.

12146 Cedar Ridge Road ♦ Williamsport, MD 21795

Senate Bill 145

State Board of Social Work Examiners-Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

I am the Program Administrator of Cedar Ridge Children's Home and School, Inc., located in Williamsport, Maryland. We are a mental health residential Group Home licensed by the Maryland Department of Health. We have been serving the mental health and behavioral health needs of at risk youth for over 50 years. As part of our state licensure we are required to have licensed Master Level Social Workers (MSW) to deliver the therapy needed by all our youth. Without these licensed providers we cannot attend to the mental health needs of the youth we serve.

If Senate Bill 145 is passed, it would allow us to hire staff who are ready to heal our youth in a much faster time frame. We would not have gaps in service, or overwork the few therapists we have, while waiting on a new hire to take the licensure exam, and begin doing their job. This bill would allow the therapist to deliver the much-needed treatment, by issuance of a Temporary License, to fill the gap until the required examination for licensure can be taken. Currently these exams are offered at times that are not immediately useful to the needs of our youth. It is the needs of the vulnerable youth we serve that is driving our desire for the passage of this bill.

I feel it is critical for the seamless continuation of mental health services we deliver to have Senate Bill 145 passed. It is a tough market right now for the few MSW's that are available. We feel it is very important that when we do hire a MSW, they are able to treat our youth as soon as possible. The passage of this bill will reduce this gap in services from months to a week or two.

In this post Covid pandemic time, we are still suffering from a reduced work force; especially in the mental health field. The quicker we can get these folks licensed and available for serving the mental health needs of the youth in our program, the faster they will be healed and the sooner they can be safely returned to their communities of origin. That is the goal of the mental health serving organizations in this state. We cannot do this efficiently without a quicker process of licensure and implementation of services by MSW's that the passage of Senate Bill 145 will provide.

Thank you

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