

March 30, 2023

The Honorable Chairwoman Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
The House Health and Government Operations Committee

RE: SB 145 – State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Griffith, Madam Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am writing to express support for SB 145.

Pressley Ridge serves some of the state's most vulnerable youth and young adults. Each year nearly 8,000 children and families are strengthened primarily through services provided in their homes and community and, if needed, in an out-of-home setting. Pressley Ridge provides individuals and families with hope and support through life's challenges. We pride ourselves on partnering with families and meeting them where they are, when they need it most.

Since 1988, Pressley Ridge has been a leader in foster care and community-based mental health services in Maryland. In recent years, we have also added supportive services for transition-age youth, including workforce development and independent living programs.

Our mission to do whatever it takes to create success for children and families requires that we be in a state of constant readiness, with the workforce to do so. We employ licensed social workers to provide critical case management, behavioral health, and therapeutic services to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. The current delays at the Board of Social Work Examiners to process applications for licensure severely limits our ability and capacity to meet those needs. Private providers like Pressley Ridge are bound by a set of regulations that limits the number of children and youth a social worker can serve in our Treatment Foster Care and Independent Living programs, thereby hampering our efforts to support the state in placing youth in these programs. In the last year we have capped admissions to our programs due to the shortage of licensed social workers. Other like providers across the state have had to do the same, resulting in fewer home settings for youth.

This bill will allow providers the opportunity to hire an applicant who has completed his or her required academic work, field education experience, passed the requisite background clearance and are simply waiting to take the licensing exam. Once hired, the employee will work under the supervision of a Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW-C). This bill can be a tool for the Board of Social Work Examiners to eliminate delays and bottlenecks in the licensing process.

We at Pressley Ridge encourage a favorable report on SB 145. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Simone Bramble, LCSW-C, LICSW
Executive Director

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