



Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony
SB 145 – State Board of Social Work Examiners –
Conditional and Temporary Licenses to Practice Social Work
Thursday, March 30, 2023
Position: Favorable

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The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization that protects the interests of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders regarding accessibility and equality issues. We are advocating for the passage of SB 145 sponsored by Senators Chris West and Mary Washington regarding State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work. There are approximately 1.2 million Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals living in the State of Maryland.

There are not enough Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Licensed Social Workers serving in our community and meeting our needs. This is a great concern of MDAD in that we seek direct communication in American Sign Language with behavioral health providers.

Due to the shortage of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Licensed Social Workers, we should expand the pool of social workers with temporary licenses which this bill will provide. Oftentimes, we don't feel comfortable working with hearing social workers AND interpreters as third-party individuals. It is overwhelming when there are too many people in the room and confidentiality can be a concern as well. Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Social Workers can be more empathic because they live and breathe in our community and use American Sign Language without having a third party involved.

With this bill, it will solve these issues and create more opportunities for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Social Workers to practice in the State of Maryland and be able to serve to serve the 1.2 million Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people living in the State.

We look forward to a favorable outcome of bill SB 145.

MDAD Board of Directors