

**SB871 and SB145 Social Work Licensure Examinations
Support with Amendments
Health and Government Operations Committee
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To: Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
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We are Professors at the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore and longtime educators of social work students. We write in support of SB871 and SB145, which provide temporary licensing, with amendments for a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers while forming a task force to develop long-term solutions.

It is critical to the mission and sustainability of the social work profession and the many diverse people we serve across metropolitan and rural communities in Maryland that BIPOC, non-native-English speakers, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and older social workers be able to practice what they have learned and been trained to do in our Schools of Social Work. There is no known research evidence that suggests these groups of social workers perform any less effectively in practice than their white, English-speaking, hearing, and younger counterparts. These bills would temporarily halt and assess the licensing exam, which currently serves as a biased barrier prohibiting the delivery of increasingly needed human services by a diverse cadre of social workers throughout our state. Working toward an inclusive solution benefits everyone. Please support the following legislation and actions:

1. **SB871- Reinstate the moratorium on all biased social work licensing exams**
The moratorium is currently amended out of SB871, which means it only sets up a workgroup. It does not put a stop to the *on-going, expensive* harms of culturally biased exams. A moratorium on all biased exams is essential.
2. **SB145 - Change “The Board *may*...” to “The Board *shall*...”**
The shift in language from “may” to “shall” requires BSWE to grant temporary licensure to qualified candidates. BSWE has yet to address disparities in social work licensure, so we cannot leave this to their discretion.
3. **SB145 - Temporary Licensure for LCSW-Cs**
Temporary licensure for social work candidates at the Clinical level (LCSW-C) is currently amended out of SB145. Given that the LCSW-C exam is just as biased as the LBSW and LMSW exam, it is imperative to include LCSW-Cs as candidates for temporary licensure. Many are ready to advance in our field but are unable to do so because of the barrier of a biased exam.

Thank you for your consideration.

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