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Judicial Proceedings Committee



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Melony Griffith  
3 East Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Senate Bill – 145 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work**

Dear Chairwoman Griffith, and members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 145 is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 167, which passed both chambers during the 2021 Session but in slightly different form. Time ran out before the differences between the bills could be worked out. This updated version reflects the House amendments of SB167 as it was passed.

There is a massive shortage of social workers in the United States amounting to more than 10,000 social workers trained in mental health issues and substance use disorders. This shortage is projected to persist until at least 2025. This problem is being exacerbated in Maryland by long delays in administering the social worker exam. Right now, our schools are graduating many social workers but they then have to wait for weeks or months to take the social worker exam.

Senate Bill 145 requires the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue temporary licenses to practice for applicants who, except for passing an examination, have met all other education and experience requirements to be licensed as social workers. This bill requires the Board to issue a temporary license if the examination is unavailable to an applicant for at least seven (7) days. Further, the license would be valid until 180 days after the examination becomes readily available.

Under Senate Bill 145, the Board maintains authority to restrict or regulate the temporarily licensed social worker(s) however it sees fit, and it explicitly provides that a social worker holding a temporary license is only authorized to practice social work under the supervision of a board-approved supervisor.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 145 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.