

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 95

(The President)(By Request - Department of Legislative Services)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

State Board of Social Work Examiners - Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

This bill extends the termination date for the State Board of Social Work Examiners by 10 years to July 1, 2024, and requires an evaluation of the board by July 1, 2023. The bill includes a related reporting requirement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues and expenditures for the State Board of Social Work Examiners are maintained beyond FY 2014. The Governor's proposed FY 2013 budget includes \$1,481,975 for board operations. The bill's reporting requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Uncodified language requires the board to submit a report to specified committees of the General Assembly, on or before October 1, 2013, that includes an analysis of licensing trends for the licensed social work associate license and updates on licensing fees and the board's disciplinary process.

Current Law/Background:

Maryland Program Evaluation Act

The State Board of Social Work Examiners is 1 of approximately 70 regulatory entities and activities currently subject to periodic evaluation under the Maryland Program Evaluation Act. The Act establishes a process better known as “sunset review” as most agencies evaluated are also subject to termination, including the State Board of Social Work Examiners, which is scheduled to terminate July 1, 2014. The sunset review process begins with a preliminary evaluation conducted by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) on behalf of the Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). LPC decides whether to waive an agency from further (or full) evaluation. If waived, legislation to reauthorize the agency typically is enacted. Otherwise, a full evaluation usually is undertaken the following year.

A copy of the DLS sunset report on the State Board of Social Work Examiners can be found at <http://dls.state.md.us/Content.aspx?page=104>.

The State Board of Social Work Examiners

Established in 1975, the 12-member board, housed in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, regulates the practice of social work in Maryland. The board licenses four distinct levels of social work practice: licensed social work associate; licensed graduate social worker; licensed certified social worker; and licensed certified social worker-clinical. There are approximately 12,000 licensed social workers in Maryland. The board has 14 regular employees, as well as 1 contractual office clerk. Like all but two health occupations boards, the board is special funded.

Sunset Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

DLS found that the board is sufficiently meeting its mandated duties, including efficiently issuing licenses and taking disciplinary actions where warranted. Since the last sunset evaluation of the board in 2002, the board has improved data collection, provided staff training, filled vacant staff and board positions in a timely fashion, and improved the relationship between board staff and members. The board’s website has improved and social workers have been educated on self-reporting of disciplinary violations. The board has also improved its financial forecasting.

Given the significant progress made by the board since 2002, DLS recommended that LPC waive the board from full evaluation and that legislation be enacted to extend the board’s termination date by 10 years to July 1, 2024. To address the handful of

administrative issues raised in this evaluation, DLS recommended that the board submit a follow-up report. This bill implements DLS' recommendations, as adopted by LPC at its December 13, 2011 meeting.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 73 (The Speaker)(By Request - Department of Legislative Services) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/ljm

Analysis by: Jennifer B. Chasse

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510