

SB0379/133321/1

BY: Finance Committee

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 379
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, strike in their entirety lines 2 and 3 and substitute “**Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure – Extension and Duties**”; strike beginning with “repealing” in line 4 down through “Examiners” in line 6 and substitute “extending the termination date of the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure; altering the duties of the Workgroup”; in line 6, strike “the regulation of social workers” and substitute “the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure”; strike in their entirety lines 7 through 16, inclusive; and after line 16, insert:

“BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Chapter 228 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2023
Section 2 and 3”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, after line 18, insert:

“Chapter 228 of the Acts of 2023

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) There is a Workgroup on Social Worker Examination Requirements for Licensure.

(b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

(1) one member of the Senate of Maryland who is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;

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(2) one member of the House of Delegates who is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Secretary of Health, or the Secretary's designee;

(4) the Secretary of Human Services, or the Secretary's designee;

(5) the Chair of the State Board of Social Work Examiners, or the Chair's designee;

(6) the Chair of the Maryland Commission on Health Equity, or the Chair's designee;

(7) the Executive Director of the State Board of Social Work Examiners, or the Executive Director's designee;

(8) the Director of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or the Director's designee;

(9) one social worker who is deaf or hard of hearing and is familiar with the licensing process for deaf and hard of hearing social workers, designated by the Maryland Association of the Deaf;

(10) one representative of the NAACP Maryland State Conference, designated by the President of the NAACP Maryland State Conference;

(11) one representative of the Baltimore Legacy Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers, designated by the Baltimore Legacy Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers;

(12) one representative of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, designated by the Executive Director of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers;

(13) one member from the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, designated by the President of the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work;

(14) two representatives of the Association of Social Work Boards, designated by the President of the Association of Social Work Boards; and

(15) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

(i) three Deans of Social Work from accredited social work master's programs serving the State, one of which shall be from a historically Black college or university;

(ii) three representatives from nongovernmental social service organizations that primarily work to support Western Maryland, Central Maryland, and the Eastern Shore; and

(iii) two individuals who received a master's degree in social work within the immediately preceding 10 years and who have been negatively impacted by the examination requirement for licensure under Title 19 of the Health Occupations Article.

(c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Workgroup.

(d) The Maryland Department of Health shall provide staff for the Workgroup.

(e) A member of the Workgroup:

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(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) To complete its work as required under this section, the Workgroup may:

(1) establish subgroups; or

(2) contract with an entity with expertise in analyzing assessment bias.

(g) The Workgroup shall:

(1) determine:

(i) whether to continue to use examinations developed by the Association of Social Work Boards as a requirement for a bachelor social worker license or a master social worker license;

(ii) whether to establish a temporary license for applicants for a bachelor social worker license or a master social worker license who, except for passing an examination required under Title 19, Subtitle 3 of the Health Occupations Article, meet the education and experience requirements for a license to practice bachelor social work or master social work under Title 19 of the Health Occupations Article;

(iii) how supervision may be provided to bachelor social worker licensees and master social worker licensees at no cost to the licensees;

(iv) if the Workgroup determines under item (i) of this item that the examinations developed by the Association of Social Work Boards should not be used or under item (ii) of this item that temporary licenses should be established, whether additional experience or education requirements are necessary;

(v) a timeline for phasing in any determinations made under item (i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of this item; and

(vi) an outline and timeline for conducting the study required in subsection (h) of this section; and

(2) (i) on or before September 1, 2023, submit a preliminary report of the findings and recommendations required under item (1)(i) through (iv) of this subsection to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article; and

(ii) on or before December 1, 2023, submit an interim report of the findings and recommendations required under item (1)(i) through (iv) of this subsection and the outlines and timelines required under item (1)(v) and (vi) of this subsection to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.

(h) The Workgroup shall:

(1) examine each type of license established under Title 19 of the Health Occupations Article by:

(i) conducting a bias analysis of the qualifications for each type of license;

(ii) determining whether each type of license is necessary;

(iii) identifying alternatives to examination requirements that may be used to assess an applicant’s qualifications for each type of license;

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(iv) considering examination testing options, including the development of a State-based competency examination, minimum requirements for a national examination to be approved for State applicants, utilization of ranges of examination scores, and other policies to ensure a bias-free examination;

(v) identifying barriers in addition to the examination that present challenges to licensure in the State; and

(vi) identifying the circumstances under which unlicensed individuals work in State and federal government positions as social workers; and

(2) on or before December 1, 2024, report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on its:

(i) findings under item (1) of this subsection; and

(ii) recommendations to eliminate bias and make the process for licensing social workers in the State more fair, diverse, and efficient.

(I) THE WORKGROUP SHALL:

(1) EXAMINE:

(I) ALTERATIONS MADE TO THE EXAMINATION DEVELOPED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS AND IMPLEMENTED BEGINNING IN 2026, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF:

1. THREE-OPTION MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS;

2. A MODULARIZED EXAM FORMAT ALLOWING TEST TAKERS TO RETAKE ONLY CONTENT AREAS ON WHICH THE TEST TAKER DID NOT ACHIEVE A PASSING SCORE;

(II) THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS ALLOWING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR TEST TAKERS, INCLUDING ACCOMMODATIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR TEST TAKERS:

1. WITH A DISABILITY OR HEALTH CONDITION; OR
2. WHO USE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE; AND

(III) THE PROVISION OF TEST-TAKER AND EDUCATOR EXAM PREPARATION MATERIALS BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS; AND

(2) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2026, REPORT TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON:

(I) ITS FINDINGS UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION; AND

(II) WHETHER TO CONTINUE TO USE EXAMINATIONS DEVELOPED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS AS A REQUIREMENT FOR A BACHELOR SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE OR A MASTER SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has

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been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted. Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective through June 30, [2025] 2027, and, at the end of June 30, [2025] 2027, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.”.

On pages 1 through 4, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 19 on page 1 through line 29 on page 4, inclusive.

On page 4, in line 31, strike “October” and substitute “June”.