

Written Testimony in Favor of HB 811 State Board of Social Work Examiners – Revisions
on behalf of Dean Postmus, University of Maryland School of Social Work
Hearing date: February 18, 2021

Thank you Delegate Pendergrass, Delegate Pena-Melnyk, and all the members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. The University of Maryland, School of Social Work is providing this written testimony in support of Delegate Cullison's HB 811, which amends the Maryland Social Work Licensing Statute in approximately twelve ways. We support the efforts of the Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) who are proposing these changes.

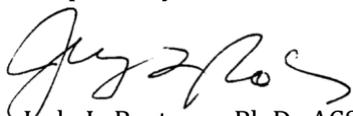
Many of the proposed changes, while not substantive, do reflect the advances in the behavioral health context and provide helpful updates. They include: changing the reference to the different licenses as "categories" instead of types of social work licenses; removing outdated references to the term "graduate" social work; substituting the word "mental" with the term "behavioral health"; replacing the reference to the definitions in Md. Health-General Code Ann. § 10-101 with the definitions in Md. Health-General Code Ann. § 7.5-101 which includes a more comprehensive list of behavioral health disorders; changing the Social Worker Rehabilitation "Committee" to the Social Worker Rehabilitation "Process" to allow for greater flexibility by the BSWE when responding to complaints; reinforcing that the practice of social work is theory, knowledge, procedures, methods AND ethics; and increasing fines for violations to \$10,000 as the BSWE did to many other violations through past legislation.

Two other proposed changes would align Maryland statute more consistently with other licensing laws in surrounding states by phasing out the LCSW license in 2023 and reducing the number of required number of hours from 144 to 100 for a LMSW working toward the LCSW-C license. These changes will provide reciprocity and consistency among the states.

We are unclear of the changes they wish to make (page 9 lines 4-5) for the Board Approved Supervisors process because this bill only identifies they will "approve a licensee to provide supervision IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS." We trust the regulations they plan to draft will be in agreement with the statute.

We graduate on average 450 graduate MSWs each year and we represent an extensive, skilled, and dedicated workforce of social workers in Maryland. Social workers practicing in Maryland rely on a licensing statute which reflects the high standards of our profession with clarity and consistency. We appreciate the efforts of our BSWE and support HB 811.

Respectfully submitted,



Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW
Dean & Professor