

HEATHER BAGNALL
Legislative District 33
Anne Arundel County

Health and Government Operations
Committee



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 160
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3406 · 301-858-3406
800-492-7122 Ext. 3406
Heather.Bagnall@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 3, 2022

Testimony in Support of House Bill 173 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about House Bill 173.

House Bill 173 is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 167, which passed both the House and Senate during the 2021 Session of the Maryland General Assembly. The bill in its current version reflects the House amendments of SB167 as it was passed.

In short, this bill will permit 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. The Board may exercise this rule and 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 ninety (90) days after the examination becomes readily available.

The authority on whether to issue a temporary license to a social worker applicant who has not yet passed the final examination remains entirely at the discretion of the State Board. Further, the Board also maintains authority to restrict or regulate the temporarily licensed social worker(s) however it sees fit.

Public health and other emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic, as we have seen result in systematic disasters that cripple our infrastructures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, testing centers were forced to close which prevented social work students from taking their final licensing examination. This limited work opportunities for students and prevented employers from being able to employ enough workers for their businesses.

House Bill 173 provides an opportunity for the Board to issue temporary licenses as a backup provision in response to emergency crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 173.