



Board of Social Work Examiners

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Karen Richards, Chair – Stanley E. Weinstein, Executive Director

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2022 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: HB 173
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Oppose

TITLE: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill (HB) 173 creates a temporary license for applicants of the Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) and Licensed Masters Social Worker (LMSW) license. It permits applicants to practice social work in Maryland without passing the National Examination by the Association of Social Work Boards.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (the Board) strongly opposes HB 173 and believes it is counter to the Board's mission of protecting the public. The national examination determines if an applicant has the minimum competence to begin practicing a profession that is safe, competent, and ethical. This is different from possessing a social work degree which addresses learned fundamental knowledge and skill needed to practice safely. Current evidence shows that up to 20% of applicants fail the exam. That same 20% could actually be practicing social work with a temporary license. The Board feels this is unacceptable in the interest of public safety.

Social workers work with and treat vulnerable populations including abused and neglected children, people with behavioral health problems, and survivors of crime and domestic violence. A temporary license would permit these applicants to address these problems without demonstrating competence. The implementation of a temporary license has the potential to expose the public to unethical or incompetent practice.

Additionally, if enacted, it would place a burden on employers and the Board to ensure that those with a temporary license reapply for a permanent license, or not practice without a permanent license. The temporary license will create confusion for clients and employers who may not understand the nuances of what a temporary license means. In addition, there are questions regarding whether a supervisor would be willing to assume the risk and responsibility for an untested temporary licensee.

For these reasons the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requests an unfavorable report on HB 173. If you need more information, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Weinstein at 410-764-4722 or stanley.weinstein@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.