

**TESTIMONY OF HEATHER ROY
(OPPOSED)**

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023

Greetings and thank you for this opportunity to present my position of opposition regarding Senate Bill 730. I am a Research Psychologist working in Maryland. I earned my graduate degree in Counseling Psychology from Loyola University Maryland, and I have previous experience as a Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor providing family therapy. I am also a friend who has witnessed the obstacles, barriers, and lack of transparency provided by the Maryland Board of Social Work and Examiners as my friend, Ms. Christie Polley, a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (whose oppositional testimony has also been provided), and survivors have offered very serious complaints, including sexual assault of a minor, against a former Maryland LCSW-C. I am also a mother who must consider the safety of her children when making any decisions. It is through these professional and personal lenses that I provide my testimony today.

Given my educational background, I have always viewed therapy as a healthy and safe space. However, given the severity of these complaints, and more importantly to this testimony, the lack of urgency, transparency, and general responsiveness of the Board, has left me alarmed as a professional who has familiarity with these spaces, angry as a friend who has witnessed the lack of justice provided, and deeply disturbed and concerned as a mother who now would carefully question the safety of the spaces therapy may provide to my children.

Without decisive action from the Board, it seems there are very little consequences to such abhorrent and dangerous behaviors, and more importantly protections for those affected. The Board's flawed disciplinary process in response to these serious complaints over the past two years are evidence of an unsafe and unsupportive environment for professionals practicing in this field, clients, and community members.

To approve Senate Bill 730, which to my understanding, would allow the Maryland Board of Social Work to continue operations without an immediate audit or review, would be negligent. I implore you to consider the safety of the community, who when seeking therapy are at their most vulnerable, and I ask you to not only deny Senate Bill 730 but to require an audit of the Maryland Board of Social Work complaint review and disciplinary processes, with the requirement of a written plan with time requirements to address all shortcomings and failures. Without this supportive requirement the Board will not be able to improve their response to complaints and disciplinary process to create the safe space our community demands and deserves.