



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS AND OTHER TOPICS, VISIT [WWW.ARCNCR.ORG](http://WWW.ARCNCR.ORG)

March 9, 2023

Senate Bill 0872

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

Position: FAVORABLE

I am Steven Acerno, Director of the Treatment Foster Care program at The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region and current chair of The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY). MARFY is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in the foster care system due to abuse, neglect, severe mental health issues, and complex medical needs. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's Treatment Foster care Program serves youth with emotional/behavioral issues, medically fragile youth as well as teen mothers.

The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region foster care program employs licensed social workers to provide case management and clinical services to these children and their families. Currently, there is a shortage of licensed social workers throughout the state of Maryland. This shortage directly and drastically impacts the number of children and families which the provider community is capable of serving. Private programs in the state have regulatory limits on the caseload size of social workers. The inability to fill positions results in fewer youth receiving care. In this time when we have a shortage of placement options for children in foster care, we need practical and immediate solutions to ensure that qualified individuals are available to enter the workforce.

Individuals who enter the social work field enter it because they have a passion to help those in need, for social justice, and to advocate for those who do not have a voice. The state of Maryland is experiencing a workforce crisis related to social workers entering the field, and it is imperative that we make it possible for these individuals to do the good work they are trained for as soon as possible.

The provider community is committed to a multi-disciplinary approach to alleviating this workforce crisis. The passage of this bill will help to remove the first barrier to

our ability to meet this exponentially growing need. It is for these reasons that I respectfully ask for a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 0872. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Acerno, LCSW-C". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Steve Acerno, LCSW-C

For more information call or email: Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 |  
therese@ashlargr.com