

March 9, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Will Doyle, LICSW

Re: SB0871 Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup
SB0872 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: Favorable

I have been a Maryland resident since 2010. I have been a licensed social worker since 2008 and a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in Washington, DC since 2013. I have worked in homeless services in Washington, DC since 2006.

I fully support **SB0871 and SB0872**, which provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers. Both bills are urgently needed to address the discriminatory barrier of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams that the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners currently require for social work licensure. After many years of pressure, the Association of Social Work Boards released pass rate data covering the years of 2011 to 2021 on August 5, 2022. This data revealed incredible disparities in pass rates by race, age and those for whom English is a second language. I have included first time pass rate data showing a Masters Exam pass rate of 55.5% for Black test takers as compared to 92.8% for white test takers. Other pass rate disparities are also startlingly bad.

As a direct result of the use of these incredibly flawed exams, **Marylanders have been deprived of 1,227 licensed social workers**. The data I have attached shows how these exams have directly caused workforce shortages. In turn, these shortages have caused harm to the public due to the related unmet needs. I have personally witnessed how the mental health workforce shortage has harmed my family, friends and neighbors.

You will hear testimony from the Association of Social Work Boards, but they will not take any accountability for their exams. Instead, they will insist that their exams are needed to ensure social work competence and public protection. However, despite over 40 years of use, **no evidence of correlation between passing the Association of Social Work Boards' exams and both social work competence and public protection has ever been produced**. They will also not mention that their CEO, in a December 21, 2020 letter to social work deans and directors, stated that the "ASWB does not collect and thus does not release exam outcomes based on demographics". I have attached the full statement in my testimony. Based on their subsequent release of 10 years of such data, this has proven to be an incredible lie. Additionally, despite being a nonprofit, the Association of Social Work Boards increased their net assets by over \$22 million in the period from 2011 to 2020, reflecting how they profit through their monopoly on social work licensing despite their flawed and biased exams. I have also included an attachment presenting this data.

You will hear testimony indicating that removing the Association of Social Work Boards' exams will cause harm to the public and some may try to present Illinois' removal of the Masters Exam as an example. However, their example has already led to thousands of additional licensed social workers to address their own workforce shortage and was only done after they determined that **bachelors and masters level social workers don't pose a significant risk to the public**. I have included an interview with NASW Executive Director, Joel Rubin, as evidence.

You will hear testimony against these bills from NASW-MD. This is despite the national NASW stating on February 3, 2023 that "The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) opposes the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language." I have attached their statement to my testimony. SB071 and SB0872 are consistent with opposing the Association of Social Work Boards exams, so **opposition from NASW-MD puts them in opposition to their own national organization**.

Other national social work organizations, namely The Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Deans and Directors Schools of Social Work, have made strong public statements calling for the removal of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams from social work licensure requirements. The Council on Social Work Education sent letters to each state's social work licensing board. I have included both statements with my testimony.

Requiring social work licensing exams at the bachelors and masters level is redundant. I urge you to consider the following social work education requirements as evidence of the sufficiency of degrees without exams at those licensure levels:

The Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) is responsible for the accreditation of bachelors and masters social work programs. The CSWE [utilizes](#) (1) a competency based approach to assess student "ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice situations in a culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being." Accredited social work programs educate students within the framework of the following 9 competencies:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

The competencies are related to the practice of social work rather than strictly objective information that can be assessed through multiple choice exams. These competencies are

developed and assessed through the field education components of social work programs. Bachelors level graduates complete a minimum of 400 supervised field education hours and Masters level graduates complete a minimum of 900 supervised field education hours.

Besides the Association of Social Work Boards' exams as part of social work licensure, Maryland has significant requirements that adequately promote the goal of social work competence and public protection. Please consider the following requirements in assessing their efficacy:

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) have a bachelors degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. To maintain licensure, LBSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 30 continuing education hours. LBSWs are required to practice under a social work supervisor unless approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners for independent practice. While under supervision, LBSWs need to receive a minimum of 3 hours per month or 1 hour for every 40 hours work of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. An LBSW can apply for independent practice status after completing 3 years of active licensure, 4,500 hours of work experience, and 150 hours of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) have a masters degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. To maintain licensure, LMSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours. LMSWs are required to practice under a social work supervisor unless approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners for independent practice. While under supervision, LMSWs need to receive a minimum of 3 hours per month or 1 hour for every 40 hours work of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. An LMSW can apply for independent practice status after completing 3 years of active licensure, 4,500 hours of work experience, and 150 hours of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Certified Social Worker (LCSW) have completed at least 3,000 hours of supervised social work experience over at least 104 weeks. Applicants also must receive at least 100 hours of supervision as an LMSW and therefore need to have completed all related requirements for licensure at the LMSW level. Supervision must be provided by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. To maintain licensure, LCSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) have completed at least 3,000 hours of supervised clinical social work experience over at least 104 weeks. This must be direct service to clients, with at least 1,500 hours being face to face client contact. Applicants also must receive at least 100 hours of supervision as an LMSW and therefore need to have completed all related requirements for

licensure at the LMSW level. Supervision must be provided by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. The content of supervision must [include](#) (2) "assessment, formulation of a diagnostic impression, and treatment of mental disorders and other conditions and the provision of psychotherapy." Applicants must also have completed at least 12 credit hours in clinical courses from a CSWE accredited social work program. To maintain licensure, LCSW-Cs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours.

All licensed social workers are listed in an online database available to the public [here](#) (3) and are subject to oversight by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners maintains a process to receive complaints against licensed social workers [here](#) (4). The National Association of Social Workers defines the [Code of Ethics](#) (5) for the social work profession. Maryland also has its own [Code of Ethics](#) (6) for social work.

Professionally, I manage a Housing First program in Washington, DC that provides case management services to over 500 individuals who currently or previously experienced chronic homelessness. I have directly witnessed staff who I as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker have assessed as qualified and competent be impacted by the use of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams. After obtaining Masters in Social Work degrees to advance their careers and increase their social work competence, they failed the Association of Social Work Boards' exam and were no longer eligible to work in Washington, DC. Despite the DC Council providing historic funding for housing vouchers to make great strides in ending chronic homelessness in 2021, we continue to struggle in 2023 with using these funded resources due to the barrier of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams. Since COVID started in March 2020, we have had 74 unlicensed bachelors and masters level social workers apply to work as Case Managers. However, due to being unlicensed we could not consider them for work in Washington, DC. We have been attempting to hire masters level social workers since September 2022 to serve as supervisors who could aid us in ending homelessness for 125 more individuals. However, with the workforce shortage caused by the Association of Social Work Boards' exams, we have been unable to hire despite consistent hiring efforts and the offer of bonuses. As a result, we have homeless individuals dying while waiting for available staff.

For the reasons listed above, I urge the committee to issue favorable reports for Senate Bills 0871 and 0872.

Sincerely,



Will Doyle, LICSW
College Park, MD
District 21

MD ASWB First Time Pass Rates

Bachelors Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	7	
	Black	189	39.7%
	Hispanic/Latino	40	67.5%
	Multiracial	12	50.0%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	0	
	White	235	77.9%
Gender	Men	61	63.9%
	Women	437	60.9%
Age	18 - 29	294	65.3%
	30 - 39	106	54.7%
	40 - 49	59	54.2%
	50 and older	39	59.0%
Language	English	464	62.5%
	Non-English	34	44.1%

Masters Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	218	82.1%
	Black	2,708	55.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	458	79.3%
	Multiracial	207	85.0%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	14	78.6%
	White	4,198	92.8%
Gender	Men	907	74.8%
	Women	7,092	79.0%
Age	18 - 29	4,495	83.0%
	30 - 39	2,094	75.8%
	40 - 49	919	69.0%
	50 and older	495	66.1%
Language	English	7,564	79.4%
	Non-English	439	62.4%

Clinical Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	104	84.6%
	Black	1,129	54.1%
	Hispanic/Latino	195	65.6%
	Multiracial	99	87.9%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	7	
	White	2,905	88.6%
Gender	Men	503	75.5%
	Women	4,035	79.1%
Age	18 - 29	1,405	86.8%
	30 - 39	1,982	79.8%
	40 - 49	687	67.7%
	50 and older	466	65.9%
Language	English	4,347	79.4%
	Non-English	193	62.2%

MD ASWB Eventual Pass Rates for 2011 to 2021 (from <https://www.aswb.org/exam/contributing-to-the-conversation/aswb-exam-pass-rates-by-state-province/>)

Bachelors Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	8				
	Black	203	44.3%	90	169	79
	Hispanic/Latino	41	68.3%	28	34	6
	Multiracial	12	58.3%	7	10	3
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	0				
	White	237	83.1%			
Gender	Men	65	67.7			
	Women	452	65.0%			
Age	18-29	291	71.1%			
	30-39	120	60.8%			
	40-49	59	55.9%			
	50 and older	47	53.2%			
Language	English	482	66.6%			
	Non-English	35	48.6%			

Masters Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	239	87.0%	208	232	24
	Black	3,043	70.8%	2,154	2,958	803
	Hispanic/Latino	471	89.0%	419	458	39
	Multiracial	216	90.3%	195	210	15
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	15	86.7%	13	15	2
	White	4,248	97.2%			
Gender	Men	990				
	Women	7,462				
Age	18-29	4,429				
	30-39	2,306				
	40-49	1,063				
	50 and older	658				
Language	English	7,945				
	Non-English	511				

Clinical Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	107	93.5%	100	103	3
	Black	1,233	77.6%	957	1,190	233
	Hispanic/Latino	201	88.6%	178	194	16
	Multiracial	103	92.2%	95	99	4
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	7				
	White	2,959	96.5%			
Gender	Men	522	87.9%			
	Women	4,196	91.2%			
Age	18-29	1,361	97.8%			
	30-39	2,038	93.4%			
	40-49	753	83.3%			
	50 and older	568	74.8%			
Language	English	4,514	91.4%			
	Non-English	206	79.1%			

Missing Bachelors Social Workers (LBSW)	88
Missing Masters Social Workers (LMSW)	883
Missing Clinical Social Workers (LCSW-C)	257
Total Missing Social Workers	1,227



Newsletter [Vol. 30 No. 6](#)

December 21, 2020

An open letter to social work deans and directors

Editor's note

On November 9, 2021, ASWB's Board of Directors unanimously approved a motion to gather, analyze, and release examination performance data. The motion directs ASWB staff and its consultants to develop a plan to implement this information-sharing initiative, which is anticipated to include performance data broken down by demographic group for our member jurisdictions as well as schools of social work. Read [ASWB's Board of Directors approves initiative to release examination performance data](#) to learn more.

ASWB's primary service to our members is development and administration of the licensing exams. In providing that service, ASWB is committed to developing and administering licensing exams that fairly measure minimum competence.

Several member boards have recently received inquiries from deans and directors of social work programs in their state asking about availability of data showing pass rates on ASWB exams broken down by demographics. ASWB has met with some member boards and representatives from social work academic programs to address the concerns and questions they have raised. ASWB has also created a web page, [Measuring competence fairly](#), that provides information, videos, and materials outlining the steps that are taken in the exam development process to

ensure fairness. We encourage all of our members to visit the web page. I would like to share with our member boards some perspective and thoughts on these recent inquiries in the form of a letter to the deans and directors. If any member boards would like additional information or desire to have ASWB attend a meeting of your state or provincial board, please let us know.

Dear Deans and Directors,

During 2020, the issue of racial injustice resulting from institutional racism has been prominent throughout the United States, Canada, and the world. Anyone would be hard-pressed to have missed the Black Lives Matter movement and its emphasis on this important issue and the need for change. And evidence is clear that institutional racism remains in many, if not all, systems in our society and negatively affects people of color.



Dwight J. Hymans, MSW, LCSW,
ACSW ASWB Chief Executive
Officer

With the increased movement to enact changes to modify or eliminate the systems that create disparities based on race, the ASWB exams have come under increased scrutiny. That scrutiny has taken the form of additional pressure to provide data showing whether outcomes on the licensing exams vary based on demographic differences.

By now most of you are aware of the policy ASWB has followed since the inception of the organization in 1979. **ASWB does not collect and thus does not release exam outcomes based on demographics.** It is the written policy of ASWB as directed by the ASWB Board of

Directors. We explained our process and policy in a letter sent in February to the president of the National Deans and Directors in response to NADD's initial request for this information. Nevertheless, for the past several months many of you, individually and collectively, have been asking our member boards for this data and asking whether individuals sitting for the exams have an equal chance

of being successful. The unstated assertion is that people of color do not have an equal opportunity and that the exams are biased.

ASWB follows a rigorous process to guard against bias in individual exam items (questions). The social workers involved in this process are primarily volunteers from diverse practice areas, geographic locales, and demographics. From the time exam questions are written by trained item writers, and before the questions appear as scored items on one of the exams, they undergo a stringent evaluation process. This process includes review by social work consultants who work directly with the item writers and review by Exam Committee members—themselves former item writers. This evaluation process looks at many aspects of an item, including indicators of bias. In addition to subject matter experts providing subjective analyses, psychometricians conduct objective analyses using industry-standard statistical tools. One part of the psychometric analysis determines whether varied groups have an advantage or disadvantage in determining the correct answer for that item. ASWB removes any item that shows this type of differential item functioning. This item-by-item analysis is done to assure an equal opportunity. This process is the same method used in any credible high-stakes standardized exam and is consistent with established industry standards.

ASWB's responsibility is to provide services to our members as they work to accomplish their mandate of protecting the public. ASWB's primary service to our members is development and administration of the licensing exams. In providing that service, ASWB is committed to developing and administering licensing exams that fairly measure minimum competence. The exams must be reliable, valid, and legally defensible to ensure that the licensing boards and regulatory bodies that use the exams can stand behind them when a license to practice social work is awarded to an applicant. ASWB answers to the state and provincial member boards who govern the association and determine our bylaws and leadership. They must—and do—hold ASWB to a high standard.

That same mandate of protecting the public drives the work of ASWB. And it provides direction in deciding what the association can and should do within the boundaries of that mandate. ASWB's responsibility to our members doesn't

preclude responding to requests from nonmember organizations. But it does mean we must first ask whether the request is within ASWB's mandate and whether the information we provide is usable data that can help individuals and those assisting them in preparing for the licensing exam and professional practice.

During an earlier time in my career, I spent 15 years teaching and directing field placement programs in three different social work academic programs. I experienced the challenge of preparing students for the profession. Recognizing the challenges for educators, ASWB is currently looking at some data points that are available and can be aggregated in a manner that may be helpful to academic programs. We are also in the process of reconfiguring current resources available to assist in preparing for the exams in a new, less expensive format.

While many believe that ASWB is a social work organization by virtue of its name, the entirety of the name clearly indicates that ASWB is a regulatory organization. As such, ASWB is accountable to the members of the association: the regulatory bodies in 64 states, provinces, districts, and territories. Based on the purpose and use of licensing exams and the data currently collected, ASWB wants to be sure that any information shared with the social work community is first accurate and second appropriate for use in this manner. ASWB is committed to exploring options that meet these criteria.

ASWB Financial Information

Taken from: <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/222414510>

Year Ending December	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Net Income
2020	\$16,234,758	\$13,237,385	\$2,997,373
2019	\$17,595,886	\$14,857,969	\$2,737,917
2018	\$16,344,808	\$13,645,258	\$2,699,550
2017	\$15,565,636	\$13,254,089	\$2,311,547
2016	\$13,767,709	\$12,604,039	\$1,163,670
2015	\$13,964,190	\$11,244,788	\$2,719,402
2014	\$12,692,553	\$9,867,582	\$2,824,971
2013	\$11,492,614	\$9,120,837	\$2,371,777
2012	\$10,279,908	\$8,782,127	\$1,497,781
2011	\$9,461,425	\$8,457,538	\$1,003,887
Average	\$13,739,949	\$11,507,161	\$2,232,788
Total	\$137,399,487	\$115,071,612	\$22,327,875
	Net Assets as of 12/31/20:		\$33,841,553

The Social Work Podcast

Provides information on all things social work, including direct practice (both clinical and community organizing), research, policy, education... and everything in between.

[Home](#) [Categories / Site Map](#) [Archives / APA](#) [Helplines](#)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023

Eliminating the ASWB exam from the Illinois LSW law: Interview with Joel Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE



[Episode 133] Today's episode of the Social Work Podcast is an interview with Joel L. Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE about the legislative process that NASW-IL went through to eliminate the requirement that BSW and MSW graduates from accredited social work programs in Illinois had to take the ASWB licensing exam in order to get their LSW.

Joel has served as the Executive Director of the 5,000 member Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) since October of 1999.

He shares the story about how and why the legislation changed. We talked about how the legislative process works, from connecting with other social workers online about pressing issues, to reaching out to NASW staff and volunteer board members, supporting prospective legislative candidates, meeting with your elected officials and how NASW state chapters serve as a resource for social workers and legislators.

Download MP3 [27:33]

0:00 / 27:33

Transcript

Introduction

Jonathan Singer: Hey there podcast listeners, Jonathan here. Today's episode is about how a bill becomes a law. It is about how States regulate social workers. About how social work organizations gatekeep who gets in and who is kept out. It is the story of how the ASWB was written out of Illinois law for basic social work licensure. Now, this story makes a little more sense with some context. On February 3, 2023 the National Association of Social Workers put out a press release (<https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2611/NASW-Opposes-Association-of-Social-Work-Boards-ASWB-Exams>) saying that they opposed, "the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language."

Now, one of the implications of the largest social work organizations in the world saying NO to the ASWB exam is that they had to take a stand on something that social workers have long wanted - the ability to provide protected services across state lines. Dozens of other regulated professions like psychology and nursing are able to practice across state lines. The desire for an interstate compact intensified during the pandemic when most social workers and many clients discovered online mental health services. Now, the press release said that "NASW is prepared to oppose the Social Work Interstate Compact Legislation being developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) if the bill is not substantially improved, including the removal of provisions which codify the ASWB exams. NASW is eager to work with CSG to develop multi-state social work practice legislation."

So, does this mean that NASW is against licensure exams? No. Does it mean that NASW is against interstate compacts? No. What it means is that the current ASWB social work licensure exam basic licensure has some real problems. And those problems were exemplified in the pass rate data that ASWB released in August 2022. ASWB released those data after years of organizations like the National Association of Deans and Directors, NASW national and state chapters, and individuals such as Matt DeCarlo and others publicly requested ASWB release their pass rate data. After the ASWB pass rate data were released, several social workers authored a Change.org petition called, ASWB: End Discriminatory Social Work Licensing Exams.

The petition was authored by Tay D. Robinson, DSW, CSW; Charla Yearwood, LCSW; Shimon Cohen, LCSW; Alex Remy, LCSW; Brit Holmberg, LCSW; Jen Hirsch, LMSW, APHSW-C; Matt DeCarlo, PhD, MSW; Gerald Joseph, MSW, ACM, CTP; Kim Young, LCSW; Cassandra Walker, LCSW CCTP; Sierra M. Wetmore, MSW; Bethany Matson, MSW. As of February 12, 2023 10,147 people had signed it.

In today's episode, I was able to talk to Joel Rubin, President of NASW Illinois. Because what they did in Illinois was really interesting. They advocated for the ASWB exam to be eliminated for basic licensure in Illinois for social workers who graduated with bachelor's or masters degrees from accredited schools of social work. Now, it's important for you to know when you're listening to this episode that there are some people who are opposed to licensure and regulation of social workers period.

Cornier & Bell's Encyclopedia of Social Work entry on ASWB notes that regulation of social workers to protect citizens from harm while receiving services from professionals extends back to 1934, when Puerto Rico passed the first statute regulating social work. California passed social work practice regulation in 1945. By 1992, all 50 states, the District of

PLEASE COMPLETE OUR AUDIENCE SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to complete this audience survey. After nearly 10 years we've finally gotten around to finding out what you like and don't like. <http://survey.podtrac.com/start-survey.aspx?pubid=lgf180kcaQ@iver=standard>. Thank you!



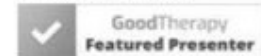
POD BEAN



STITCHER



GOODTHERAPY.ORG



CONNECT!

The Social Work Podcast on TWITTER

The Social Work Podcast on FACEBOOK

Subscribe on Apple Podcasts

Listen on Stitcher Radio



Like 2.1K people like this. Be the first of your friends.



#SOCIALWORK ON TWITTER

Tweets about #socialwork lang=en

ABOUT THE SOCIAL WORK PODCAST

The Social Work Podcast provides information on all things social work, including direct practice (both clinical and community organizing), research, policy, education... and

Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands passed social work regulation. Comer & Bell noted that opponents of regulation saw it as "elitist, exclusionary, discriminatory in requirements, restrictive to the available workforce, cumbersome, expensive, and duplicative (Bibus & Boutté-Queen, 2011; CSWE, 2018; Garcia, 1990). Macro practitioners involved with community organizing, planning, and administration have criticized licensure and regulation as favoring clinical practice over macro practice (CSWE, 2018; Donaldson, Fogel, Hill, Erickson, & Ferguson, 2016; Donaldson, Hill, Ferguson, Fogel, & Erickson, 2014; Hill, Fogel, Donaldson, & Erickson, 2017)." "The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), founded in 1968, immediately registered opposition to social work licensure because it would establish "an elitist hierarchy within the profession." Licensure would exclude paraprofessionals and baccalaureate social workers employed in community and indigenous programs, who understood and practiced with cultural competence. To learn more about the NABSW, check out Episode 38 of *Doin' the Work* podcast where Shimon Cohen interviews Mr. Garland Jagers & Dr. Denise McLane-Davison.

This episode does not argue against licensure. It argues against requiring an graduates of accredited social work programs taking a flawed exam to be licensed in Illinois. This is also different from being a license clinical social worker. In Illinois, the clinical ASWB exam is still required for the clinical licensure.

What does it mean for social workers who graduate from accredited BSW and MSW programs to become licensed social workers without having to take an exam? What does it mean for the general public? Why and how was a bill that eliminated the ASWB master's level exam as a requirement for licensure in Illinois able to move from an idea to signed legislation in a single legislative session?

So, sit back and enjoy the story of how Illinois got rid of the ASWB exam for basic social work licensure. And along the way, you're going to learn a little bit about how a bill becomes a law. And if in this moment, you are thinking of that Schoolhouse Rock cartoon from 1976, then you're my kind of people. I was six that thing came out. And it forever changed the way I understood the rough and tumble process of getting an idea to become a bill to become signed legislation. And Joel's story is going to talk a little bit about that. About how the legislative process works, from connecting with other social workers online about pressing issues, to reaching out to NASW staff and volunteer board members, supporting prospective legislative candidates, meeting with your elected officials and how NASW state chapters serve as a resource for social workers and legislators.

And so, without further ado, on to episode 133 of the Social Work Podcast: Eliminating the ASWB exam from the Illinois LSW law: An interview with Joel Rubin.

Interview

0:07:17

Jonathan Singer: Joel, thanks so much for being here today on the Social Work podcast. What's the story behind NASW Illinois advocating to eliminate the ASWB exam for Master's level licensure?

0:07:30

Joel Rubin: It's quite a story, Jonathan. First of all, thank you for having me on the podcast today. So I think to put it all in perspective, I'm going to go back a couple of years. And so this is basically in the fall of 2020. The association of Social Work Boards ASWB informed Illinois that the state was out of compliance with their testing standards and that bachelor's level social workers BSWs would soon no longer be able to be eligible to take the exam required for the LSW.

Okay? Both here in Illinois. In Illinois, the LSW exam is for BSWs with the proper supervision and MSW, it's non clinical level licensure. So that basically left the state with two options. And the first of these options was that we could have created a new BSW license that utilized the ASWB bachelor's exam. Now, that new license would have had a smaller scope of practice than the current LSW, basically upending existing bachelor's level LSWs.

The chapter in NASW Illinois opposed this action. A second option was that the state could stop licensing BSWs altogether, which effectively would make Illinois an MSW only profession. And we also post that option now. So we looked at these options, we were faced with these options, and we began to ask ourselves this following question is the ASWB exam absolutely necessary for LSW licensure? Now, that's a significant leap, a very, very significant leap that perhaps was asked in the past, but we decided to ask it, and we basically started to really inquire about what would that entail.

And so when we looked at that, we started to look at several states, including California, that don't require the ASWB exam for basic licensure. So in addition to that, in discussions with our Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, IDFPR, they indicated that data showed that this population, meaning basic licensed social workers with the non clinical level of licensure, posed very little risk to the public.

And that rigorous pre and post graduation supervision requirements, coupled with existing Illinois requirements of the words that and we all know this, that all LSWs that engage in clinical social work have to be working under the auspices and control of an LCSW. So this really created an environment where additional testing became unnecessary. So when we sort of it was sort of this AHA moment. This is coupled with the fact that for many years, both NASW Illinois and NASW on a national level and other stakeholders across the country had repeatedly requested that data be released from ASWB, because we began, and we've heard for years, or this, ancillary evidence that the ASWB test disproportionately harms social workers based on minority demographics. So this was sort of the background. Now, mind you, this was before, this past summer when ASWB released their initial data on first time test taker.

0:11:51

Jonathan Singer: So that was summer of 2022 when ASWB released the data that people have been asking for a long time. And it created this firestorm where people were like, AHA, the proof is in the pudding. You're releasing your own data and you're showing that pass rates for white test takers are in some cases double that of black test takers.

0:12:13

Joel Rubin: Correct. And we break that down. In Illinois, it was broken down. So this was proof that this was a significant, challenging situation. So put this all together. We felt that the state would be better off by actually removing the ASWB test for the LSW level of licensure, because it would continue to serve as a burden to access for many, many social workers in the state. Now, we had heard over the years from people all the time, I've tried to take not the clinical level licensure, but just the LSW level of licensure.

everything in between. Join your host, Jonathan Singer, Ph.D., LCSW, as he explores topics near and dear to every social worker's heart. The purpose of the podcast is to present useful information in a user-friendly format. Although the intended audience is social workers, the information will be useful to anyone in a helping profession (including psychology, nursing, psychiatry, counseling, and education). The general public might also find these podcasts useful as a way of learning what social workers understand to be important. If you have ideas for future podcasts, please send an email to jonathan dot b dot singer at gmail dot com.

VISITORS

LINKS

@Health.com Weekly Mental Health Newsletter
 #SWTech on Twitter
 American Association of Suicidology
 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 Council on Social Work Education
 Current Psychiatry Online
 DomesticShelters.org
 How to Listen to the Social Work Podcast
 Information for Practice
 InSocialWork University at Buffalo
 Jesse Kahn Creative
 My Sober Roommate
 National Association of Social Worker
 National Institute of Mental Health
 New Social Worker Magazine
 Psychotherapy Networker
 PubMed
 Social Work Today
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 Suicide Prevention Resource Center
 The New Center for Advanced Psychotherapy Studies (commercial site)

ABOUT YOUR HOST

Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW

I'm a Professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago and a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in working with children and families. My Twitter handle is @socworkpodcast. I have always been an advocate of technology. In the 1990s, I created a number of "first" Web sites for social service agencies in Austin, Texas. In 1996 I developed the first electronic medical record for my agency, ATCMHMR, leading to my involvement in the selection and pilot testing of the first agency-wide remote EMR program. From 1996 - 2002 I worked for ATCMHMR as a



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 3.0 License.

PODCAST VISITORS MAP

FEED VALIDATOR

Ever wonder why your RSS subscriptions don't load? Sometimes the feeds are bad. Check to see if the most recent Social Work Podcast RSS is a valid feed:



I've tried 1, 2, 3, 4 times to pass the test, and then people just give up. And that has such an impact on all kinds of things. It has impact on social workers not being regulated. It has impact on someone's career path and also making sure that we have a more diverse workforce, workforce here in the state of Illinois.

0:13:25

Jonathan Singer: So it sounds like NASW Illinois for a long time had been concerned about the ASWB exam, hearing from folks in the field who had gone through accredited schools of social work, had passed and then not been able to pass the licensure exam. And then there was this kind of ironically pressure from ASWB to do something different. And NASW Illinois decided, well, we're going to essentially think outside the box and say, maybe we don't need this. So how did you move from NASW Illinois saying, we want there to be a change to actually having this legislation that ended up being signed?

0:14:10

Joel Rubin: So, as I said earlier, after many discussions with IDFP and IDFP, noting that data shows that the LSW level of licensure does not pose that significant risk to the public. And after hearing all these things from our members for years, we decided to connect with two incredible sponsors of this legislation two social workers that are in our Illinois General Assembly that's Representative Lindsey, the Point of Chicago and State Senator Karina Via, who's a school social worker from the western suburbs of Chicago.

And we basically had a bill that more or less said was keeping the LSW level of licensure in place, but just removing the test. Okay, one of these things where and this doesn't usually happen with legislation, legislation sometimes can take 1235 long time to get passed. And then after it gets passed, it's a lot different than what you initially started out with. We introduced this legislation in early 2021, the early part of the session, and it passed both House chambers, both chambers in the Illinois General Assembly and then was signed by Governor Pritzker in August of 2021. This is Senate Bill 1632. So it's an incredible sort of an achievement on this as well.

And it went into effect January 1, 2022. Now, what this has done and what have we seen so far? So basically what the bill did, obviously it removed the ASWB exam, but it also allows Illinois BSW a continued path to licensure and employment in the profession. It removed a significant burden to access that disproportionately affects BIPOC communities and social workers without resources to pursue an MSW.

It removed yet another financial strain on recent MSW graduates and BSWS, and that is BSWS who have already completed their three years of postgraduate supervision by waiving the exam and exam prep cost associated with licensure. It also created a logical path for MSWs to becoming LSWs while collecting their required supervision hours to become a licensed clinical social worker. I can tell you that I get that question almost daily from people.

The chapter gets these questions all the time. Should I get my LSW or should I just wait to get my LCSW? What this does is it brings in a whole cohort of people now that are regulated by the state, which I think is really, really important, the importance of licensure, and I think we need to be really clear here, is that we're talking about the initial level of licensure, we're not talking about testing here.

And then lastly, too, and this is another point that this makes is that it creates a much needed path for macro level social workers to be legally called a social worker in the state of Illinois title that they've earned and entitled to carry. So this has been a significant probably in the many years that I've been with NASW, I have never encountered the more positive feedback from social workers about a significant piece of legislation.

And I can say that since the law went into effect January 1, there have been probably a couple of thousand people that have become LSWs under this new, under this new rule.

0:18:29

Jonathan Singer: So it sounds like the process for getting this legislation passed was a little different than other legislative processes in the sense that it was faster. Why do you think that was so?

0:18:45

Joel Rubin: I would say there are a couple of reasons. One is that first of all, we have the NASW Illinois chapter has a significantly strong presence in Springfield, a really good reputation in sort of relating to legislators from all different backgrounds. That's one. Two, I think we had two very motivated sponsors, both social workers. One state Rep. Lindsey the .1 state Senator Karina Via And lastly, the issue around social workforce, and this is really a workforce issue in many ways, is that we've been very focused in, in Illinois on getting a sense of what are the barriers to advancement in the social workforce, diversifying the social work workforce and issues around licensure have been a major barrier.

In fact, we had one grant funded study that we did in conjunction with Liability University of Chicago School Source to work on this issue. And we're right now finishing up another study on diversifying the pipelines of the profession. So I would say that those three kind of points sort of all came together sort of a perfect storm in many ways. Plus, I think the timing, I think there's a real recognition in our General Assembly and in the state that we need to have a really good and diverse mental health workforce and obviously social workers play a significant part of that mental health workforce.

0:20:39

Jonathan Singer: So you said you had two really strong sponsors. What does it mean in terms of the legislative process, in terms of getting legislation through committees and pass to have strong sponsors? What do they do and how do you cultivate that?

0:20:56

Joel Rubin: So one of the most important things that we do on a regular basis is that we encourage social workers to be involved in the political process. Election comes around. Legislators that are candidates that are running for office, that support social work values, these are people we need to support. And by doing that and also by being available to all these elected officials as content experts, this all helps when you want to pass legislation because a lot of times elected officials will come to an advocate, will come to NASW to say, hey, what do you think about this bill?

Or hey, someone came to me with this issue. What do you think about this? That just doesn't happen out of thin air. That happens because you do a lot of hard work working with people from the time that there are even candidates not even in

bilingual social worker providing individual, family and group therapy to children and families. From 1997 - 2000 I was co-owner of a group therapy practice specializing in conjoint family therapy. From 2002 - 2004 I was the lead therapist for Jewish Family Service and an adjunct instructor at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. As an adjunct at UT-Austin, I developed and taught the school's first Crisis Intervention course. Between 2009 and 2015 I was an assistant professor of Social Work at Temple University. I write for academic and popular publications.

View my complete profile



office. You put that all together and that's really part of the legislative process. We're mandated in our code of Ethics and Standard 6.4 to do that. So it's not anything that shouldn't be new to social workers.

It's that we just tend to think that someone else is going to do it. And the legislation that we got passed regarding the removal of the ASWB test is real proof of how that cultivation and support works.

0:22:42

Jonathan Singer: So you were able to support these folks to become part of the legislature and what did they do in the process of getting a bill passed into legislation? Like what is their role?

0:23:02

Joel Rubin: Their role is to work with other legislators together with NASW to get sponsors for a bill to make sure that a particular bill gets through a committee. It's a whole process in Springfield and having that understanding, it in support of people who are on certain committees. If a bill goes to a certain committee for a hearing to be familiar with the people on that committee, that all is part of working with different legislators and having relationship with them as well.

0:23:45

Jonathan Singer: Joel, I really appreciate you talking through the process that NASW, Illinois went through. To sort of think about not having the ASWB exam, the legislative process. And so for folks who are listening, who are kind of excited about being able to make changes at the policy level, legislative level, what are some recommendations that you have for ways they can get involved? Things that folks can do, social workers can do to make this kind of macro level change?

0:24:17

Joel Rubin: Well, first thing what social workers can do is they can join NASW. That's always an important step and it's not a cliché, but our strength is in our numbers. We have over 5000 members in the state of Illinois. We could easily have 8000 or 9000 members. So that's really important.

0:24:41

Jonathan Singer: And one of the things that's important about that, right, is that when you can tell a legislator we're representing 8000 folks, 8000 professionals, right, paid professionals who are doing this are students, then that's different than we're representing 100 people, right?

0:25:00

Joel Rubin: And generally what we say is that we represent many more than our membership because we are and a lot of people, even nonmembers, would say, oh yeah, it's great, they're doing a great job, and all that. So I think the second thing is that when someone gets an action alert from NASW about anything, it could have been about the LSW law, but it could be all kinds of legislation. Please answer it. It has never been easier to respond back to something because we generally provide people with ready made letters that you can either edit to send to all your elected officials.

You can do it from the comfort of your couch, on your phone, or whatever device you prefer. It's never been easier. That's really, really important. Thirdly is getting involved with the chapter, whether it's here in Illinois or other chapters across the country, getting involved, running for a position on the board of directors, a leadership position for students. And in here in Illinois, and this is similar to other states, is that we have a very active student liaison network that involves all social work programs here in the state of Illinois that meet monthly. And they're very involved in coordinating our annual advocacy day, which a lot of states have.

We are still waiting. We hope that we're going to be back live in 23 we don't know yet. It all depends on a lot of things. But that's a really great opportunity for people to sort of see things in action, how things work in Springfield, how things work in your state capital. But those are some real basic things that and also that when we ask people is that it's also important when you're contacting your legislature is you don't always have to go to Springfield. You can always contact or even meet with them in their district office, which is actually a preferable place to meet people. It's less hectic, there's less distractions. There's a lot of opportunities for that as well.

0:27:19

Jonathan Singer: That's great. So if I had an idea, right, something that I was seeing in my practice, something that was kind of chatter amongst my social work colleagues that I thought, this is kind of an issue that seems to be broadly problematic. What's the best way to kind of move forward with that visa vis what you're talking about?

0:27:47

Joel Rubin: So a really focused way today in which it gets obviously you can contact me directly, you can contact our legislative director Kyle Hillman directly or people on our volunteer leadership. But one of the most effective ways that people communicate to the chapter or within the member, within the social community is through our MyNASW community. It's a community digest that people posted at all time, but we have people posted about all kinds of issues from third party reimbursement to testing to referrals to all kinds of things. And we're very responsive, as all NASW chapters are, we're very responsive to our members. So if you contact us, we're going to get back to you. So that is one of the clearer ways to reach out to us as well.

0:28:54

Jonathan Singer: Well, Joel, thank you so much for being on the podcast and talking with us about NASW Illinois legislative win and the process of being involved at the policy level. I really appreciate it.

0:29:08

Joel Rubin: Thank you, Jonathan. And feel free anyone, to reach out to me at NASW. My email address is jrubin.naswil@socialworkers.org, and I appreciate this opportunity to be on your podcast. Thanks.

Transcription by deciphra.ai

Bio

Joel L. Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE has served as the Executive Director of the 5,000 member Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) since October of 1999. He has over 25 years of non-for-profit management and fundraising experience, including extensive work with boards of directors, committees and volunteers, and advocacy

around a wide variety of social work, human service and international political issues, as advocating on behalf of social work workforce issues. In addition to his responsibilities in Illinois, Mr. Rubin, served as Acting Deputy Director of Chapter Operations for the NASW from March 2019 to July 2020.

He received his MSW from Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois of Chicago in 1983 and a B.A in Comparative Politics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1981. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW), a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) in the state of Illinois and is also a Certified Association Executive (CAE).

Mr. Rubin is a graduate of the Wexner Heritage Fellowship Leadership Program and a current adjunct professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work, the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and Northeastern Illinois University.

He currently serves on the board of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership and is a member of the City of Chicago's Council on Mental Health Equity.

Mr. Rubin lives in Skokie, IL with his wife Tamara. They have three children and two grandchildren.

References and Resources

To get an idea of how many steps are involved in getting a bill signed into law in Illinois, check out:
https://www.ilga.gov/commission/lis/98bill_law.pdf

APA (7th ed) citation for this podcast:

Singer, J. B. (Producer). (2023, February 13). #133 - Eliminating the ASWB exam from the Illinois LSW law: Interview with Joel Rubin [Audio Podcast]. *Social Work Podcast*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2023/02/NASWIL.html>

Posted by Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW at 11:00PM 

Labels: #MacroSW, Interview, NASW, Policy

1 comment:

Shannon Kish said...



LOVE this!

February 17, 2023 at 11:18AM

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Picture Window theme. Powered by Blogger.

 [Previous](#) | [Home](#) | [Join](#) | [Random](#) | [Next](#)



News Releases



NASW Opposes Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Exams

Feb 03, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) opposes the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language.

NASW is prepared to oppose the Social Work Interstate Compact Legislation being developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) if the bill is not substantially improved, including the removal of provisions which codify the ASWB exams. NASW is eager to work with CSG to develop multi-state social work practice legislation.

In an August 2022 statement after the release of the ASWB data, NASW committed to working closely with its partners to propose innovative solutions that reduce harm and increase diversity at all levels of social work practice.

These efforts will initially target removal of non-independent social work practice exams which may be biased, and support efforts to strengthen competency measures.

NASW looks forward to working with its partners to implement these strategic initiatives and to promoting the diversity and well-being of the social work profession, and the health and well-being of the populations social workers serve.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, DC, is the largest membership organization of professional social workers. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy.

[All News Releases](#) | [Search News Releases](#)



Media Contacts

Greg Wright

Communications Director

202.336.8324

gwright.nasw@socialworkers.org

Evenings and weekends:

301.602.8559

Aliah Wright

Sr. Public Relations Specialist

awright.nasw@socialworkers.org



SmartBrief

Sign up for this free e-newsletter for a daily round-up of the top media stories affecting the social work profession.

Sign up for SmartBrief



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education

333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400, Alexandria, VA 22314 TEL 703.683.8080 FAX 703.683.8099 www.cswe.org

New Jersey State Board of Social Work Examiners
124 Halsey St.
Newark, New Jersey 07102

October 3, 2022

Dear Social Work Licensing Examiner:

As president and chief executive officer of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), I write to you on behalf of social work education programs across the country. As you are likely aware, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) recently released a report documenting examination pass rates across different levels of the social work profession. Although the data needs further analysis, the descriptive statistics suggest alarming disparities for exam-takers in several categories. The most egregious disparity impacts Black test takers. In addition, Indigenous, and other People of Color also pass at lower rates than White test-takers; those that speak English as a second language pass at lower rates than native English speakers; and older test-takers pass at lower rates than younger ones. Given that the ASWB exam is the only national licensing examination available, these data raise grave concern that the need for a diverse health, behavioral health, and social service workforce (of which social workers are a considerable portion of providers¹) is being significantly impeded.

As the national body for social work education in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Guam, the CSWE urges you to:

- a. Suspend the use of the ASWB exam until a thorough analysis has been completed which will suggest evidenced-based recommendations to correct for inequities.
- b. Consider graduation from a CSWE-Accredited social work education program evidence of beginning competence to practice social work as a professional social worker (granting all graduates licensure or pre-licensure status).
 - a. The only exception to the above involves the license to practice clinical social work. CSWE supports the need for a post-graduate process to license practice at this level, however if the ASWB exam remains central to this process, further analysis of the descriptive data must also occur for this category to identify possible issues.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([bls.gov](https://www.bls.gov)) 2020 report indicates there are 715,600 social workers that work in Child, Family, School, Healthcare, Mental Health, and Substance abuse treatment settings.



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education

333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400, Alexandria, VA 22314 TEL 703.683.8080 FAX 703.683.8099 www.cswe.org

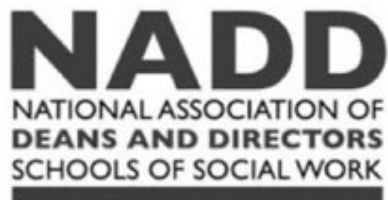
- c. Consider the action taken by the state of Illinois (January 1, 2022) through the Public Act 102-0326, whereby a licensing examination is no longer required for licensure as an Illinois Licensed Social Worker (LSW).
- d. Consider decoupling the Interstate Compact, currently in development, from the ASWB licensure exam.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to engage with you further about the concerns and/or recommendations I offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darla Spence Coffey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darla Spence Coffey, PhD, MSW
President and Chief Executive Officer
dcoffey@cswe.org



September 2, 2022

NADD STATEMENT ON ASWB RELEASE OF REPORT ON LICENSURE PASSAGE RATES

As you may now know, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the organization currently responsible for creating, implementing, and monitoring Social Work's National Licensing Examination, recently released a report documenting exam passage rates across the profession. The report helps us to understand the disparities in the diversity of Social Work's workforce nationally. Data clearly evidence extreme racial and age biases in the exam. Moreover, the report reflects an organization that perpetuated use of an exam that has substantively contributed to the documented shortage of diverse licensed social workers.

Suspecting disparities in exam passage rates, Social Work's National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD) had requested these data from ASWB for many years to identify the extent of the issue across the profession. With increasing anecdotal evidence mounting, NADD established a National Licensing Exam Task Force a year ago to elevate the issue and explore alternatives to the existing exam. NADD's primary concern is to ensure an unbiased assessment process such that achieving status as a professional social worker is accessible to all graduates of our accredited programs.

Now, having knowingly held data that clearly reflects extreme test bias, ASWB publicly released not only aggregate data across the profession, but individual State and program level data. The issue is even more egregious than anticipated and reflects a crisis in the profession. NADD calls on social work State licensing boards and legislators to urgently act to immediately address the current exam and assessment process to effect rapid equity in the nation's workforce. Specific immediate and longer-term proposed actions include:

- a. Immediately suspend all fees associated with test taking
- b. Rebate fees paid to persons experiencing multiple test attempts, particularly by groups of people where data demonstrate consistent bias
- c. Suspend Interstate COMPACT discussions based on a uniform 'standardized exam' until biased testing issues are addressed
- d. Consider legislative remedies such as those passed in Illinois and Rhode Island limiting the ASWB test option, recognizing graduation from a CSWE accredited university/college program as an optional pathway toward some levels of licensure
- e. Charge NADD, the academic leaders of the Social Work profession, to collaboratively explore alternatives to the existing exam and monitoring process

NADD is sending separate calls for action to other constituent groups, such as the Council on Social Education and the National Association of Social Workers to work together to identify and address issues that may be contributing to the noted disparities.

NADD

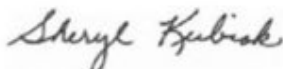
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
DEANS AND DIRECTORS
SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

We know you share NADD's concern and sense of urgency to effectively respond to these documented disparities. With Social Work workforce shortages across the nation, it is imperative for us all to work together to find responsible resolutions. Should you have any questions that we can help to inform, please contact Dr. Martell Teasley, President of NADD, at martell.teasley@utah.edu.

Sincerely,



Martell Teasley, PhD, MSW
President, NADD
University of Utah
martell.teasley@utah.edu



Sheryl Kubiak, PhD, MSW
Co-Chair, NADD Task Force
Wayne State University
deanssw@wayne.edu



Tamara S. Davis, PhD, MSSW
Co-Chair, NADD Task Force
Indiana University
tamsdavi@iu.edu