

**Senate Finance Committee
Senate Bill 730: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Sunset Extension
Support with Amendments**

March 3, 2023

Maryland's Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers represents social workers across the state. We support Senate Bill 730 with amendments. We also request a full sunset review prior to the next extension, based on the constant stream of calls made to the NASW-MD office with concerns and complaints about the Board of Social Work Examiners' processes.

Calls received by the office include how long it takes complaints to be investigated by the Board. When a formal complaint is made against a licensed social worker, it can take a year or more to close. While we want investigations to be thorough, we believe the process can be made more efficient.

We also routinely hear that while the Board is required by statute make a decision about a license application within 60 days, applicants often are notified in those 60 days that their applications are not complete. When the additional documentation is submitted, the 60 day clock starts again.

We believe the Board suffers from being understaffed. We believe the new executive director of the Board is working with Board members and staff to make improvements, but we believe a review of a number of processes is called for.

While we hope to work with the Department of Legislative Services on the review, we believe one change could be made now to help the process. This amendment would require the board to let an applicant know within 10 days of their application is not complete.

Amendment No. 1

§19-303. Health Occupations

(a) To apply for a license, an applicant shall:

- (1) Submit an application to the Board on the form that the Board requires; and
- (2) Pay to the Board the application fee set by the Board.

(b) The Board shall:

- (1) Review each application AND NOTIFY THE APPLICANT WITHIN 10 DAYS IF THE APPLICATION IS COMPLETE OR NOT; and
- (2) Notify each applicant whether the applicant has been approved to take the pertinent licensure examination within 60 days from the date the Board received a completed application from the applicant.

With this amendment, we urge a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Mary Beth DeMartino, LCSW-C
Executive Director