



**March 10, 2023**

**Senate Bill 872  
State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work  
Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (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 out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

If passed, Senate Bill 872 would authorize the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical to an applicant who, except for passing the required examination, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for licensure. A temporary license is valid until the earlier of (1) notification of permanent licensure or (2) two years after the date on which the temporary license was issued, with specified exceptions for renewal. A temporary license authorizes the holder to practice social work only within the scope of the specific category of license issued while the temporary license is effective.

Private providers experienced significant obstacles prior to COVID-19 as it pertained to hiring social workers due to an identified national shortage; and this challenge has become more compounded as a result of the pandemic in combination with other unforeseen events such as malware attacks on State websites and administrative delays in processing applications. The delay in a graduate's ability to sit for their exam to obtain their licensure considerably impedes employer's capacity to offer employment subsequently hindering clinical services that our youth, families, and communities require. Due to the current unprecedented hindrances, it took many agencies over 10 months to fill social worker positions in some group homes over the past two-years.

As worker challenges continue, the state of our current mental health needs as it pertains to caring for our most vulnerable populations far exceeds anything MARFY members have ever witnessed. We strongly advocate for modifications to current practices be considered to align with our existing barriers for the mental well-being and safety of our youth, families, and communities. Allowing this bill to pass would provide an opportunity to amend the current statutes to meet the rising needs of our community.

**It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 872.**

**For more information call or email:**

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