

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your support for SB 0871 with amendments and SB 0872.

These bills address the biased exams (created by the ASWB) that Maryland law currently requires social workers to pass in order to be licensed to practice. The ASWB recently released statistics showing discriminatory pass rates based on race, age, and first language spoken.

Considering that passing these exams are effectively required to practice social work in Maryland, there is no place for *any* bias or discrimination in their pass rates. These bills place a moratorium on using the exam while a work-group is established to plan alternatives and create the option for the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners to offer a temporary license to folks who have struggled to pass the exam.

While it's proponents would say the exam ensures social worker competence and therefore greater safety for the public, there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice.

This biased exam is effectively barring qualified social workers from being able to practice social work with no public benefit, when we are experiencing shortages of social workers across the state. I am a therapist in private practice and have maintained a waitlist of folks wanting to receive mental health therapy, since I started my practice in 2019. No one should have to wait months to see a therapist for necessary mental health care, and this exam has deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers since it has been in use.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Line, LCSW-C". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellen Line, LCSW-C  
Founder and Clinical Social Worker  
ROAR Wellness Co.