

# **MdCSWC** The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

The MdCSWC, sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,300 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland.

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Chris West

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Chair, Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

DATE: March 10, 2023

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 871 – Social Workers - Licensure Examinations -  
Moratorium and Workgroup

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I am Judith Gallant, Chair of the MD Clinical Social Work Coalition (MdCSWC), sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work. We represent the interests of more than 9,300 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland. On behalf of MdCSWC, we **oppose** Senate Bill 871.

Senate Bill 871 would remove the licensure examination requirement for all Social Workers in MD, including LCSW-Cs. The bill would also require the MD Department of Health to establish a workgroup to study alternatives to the exam requirements.

Currently, the LCSW-C is considered a health care provider in MD. We diagnose and provide psychotherapy to individuals suffering from mental health disorders or substance use conditions. However, since the licensure for all other health care providers depends on passing an exam, the bill's proposed elimination of licensing exams could jeopardize insurance reimbursement and provision of clinical services. Such jeopardy could come at a time when there is a mental health crisis in our country and our state, and mental health providers are in short supply. With Clinical Social Workers being the largest provider of mental health treatment in our country, can Maryland afford to lose the treatment Clinical Social workers provide? The testing requirement currently serves as an essential component of public protection.

Additionally, doing away with current testing will put at risk Maryland's participation in the Interstate Social Work Compact, recently released by the Council of State Governments. The Compact will broaden the availability of social workers to practice in our State, and it will broaden opportunities for Maryland licensed social workers to practice in other states. The Compact requires that a state's Clinical Social Work licensure entails passing a nationally recognized exam in order for the state to become part of the Compact.

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is responsible for the national exams. ASWB is partnering with a number of Social Work organizations (including the Clinical Social Work Association) to examine and eliminate any racial bias issues there may be within the exams. This review will take some time. Passage of SB 871 would likely result in unintended consequences that could be extremely damaging to our clients and our profession. For these reasons, we respectfully **oppose** Senate Bill 871.

Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work: [www.gwscsw.org](http://www.gwscsw.org)

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