

March 9, 2023

Senate Bill 0871

State Board of Social Work Examiners – License Examinations-Moratorium and Workgroup

Position: FAVORABLE

I am Steven Acerno, Director of the Treatment Foster Care program at The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region and current chair of The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY). 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 the foster care system due to abuse, neglect, severe mental health issues, and complex medical needs. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's Treatment Foster care Program serves youth with emotional/behavioral issues, medically fragile youth as well as teen mothers.

Last year the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) published a report that highlighted alarming outcome disparities among test takers. Overwhelmingly, test takers of minority groups failed the exam at a much higher rate. This issue can/will have significant negative impacts on the social work field if not addressed. Senate Bill 0871 will allow for the opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan to address concerns associated with the social work license exam. This bill allows otherwise qualified social workers to enter the social work field and address the current critical need of social workers in the state, while an identified workgroup assesses next steps in the exam requirements of the field. It is for these reasons that I respectfully ask for a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 0871. Thank you.



Steve Acerno LCSW-C

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