



Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Mary Washington

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Director, GWSCSW Legislation and Advocacy

DATE: March 30, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT AS AMENDED** – Senate Bill 871 – *Social Workers – Sunset Extension, Notification of Complete Application, and Workgroup on Social Worker Examination Requirements for Licensure*

The Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) was established in 1975 to promote and advance specialization of clinical practice within the social work profession. Through our lobbying, education, community building, and social justice activities, we affirm our commitment to the needs of those in our profession, their clients, and the community at large. **On behalf of GWSCSW, we support Senate Bill 871, as amended.**

As amended, the bill would establish the Workgroup on Social Worker Examination Requirements for Licensure, which is charged with (1) identifying alternatives to examination requirements; (2) developing recommendations for an assessment method for independent practice to replace the Association of Social Work Board's (ASWB) examination; and (3) on or before December 1, 2023, the Workgroup shall report the its *preliminary* findings and recommendations to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee and on or before July 1, 2024, the Workgroup shall report its *final* findings and recommendations.

Additionally, the bill requires the Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) to review an application within 10 days of receipt and notify the applicant if the application is incomplete and extends the BSWE sunset date to 2025. As amended, the bill will still require an examination for licensure.

We recognize the inequities in pass rates with the ASWB exam and understand something needs to be done. ASWB, the organization responsible for creating and administering the exam nationwide, took the step of publishing the national, state, and school exam pass rate data to contribute to and lead engagement in profession-wide conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. ASWB is taking a multifaceted approach to addressing these disparities, including collaborating with the social work community to bring more perspectives, including those of individuals representing diverse racial, social, economic, geographic, and ethnic backgrounds, into the exam development process. This is part of a larger national discussion, and while it is not specific to Maryland, we support the bill's provisions that establish a workgroup to examine alternatives to address these inequities.

GWSCSW supports Senate Bill 871, as amended.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000