

Written Testimony from Dean Postmus in favor of SB 871:

*Social Workers - Sunset Extension, Notification of Complete Application, and Workgroup on Social Worker Examination Requirements for Licensure
Health and Government Operations Committee
March 30, 2023*

Good afternoon Madame Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I'd like to express my thanks to Senator Washington for taking on the complex challenge of determining how to address the racist and ageist biases in the exam administered by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). These biases contribute to a documented shortage of diverse licensed social workers in Maryland and across the country.

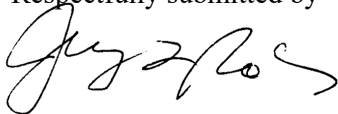
The University of Maryland School of Social Work appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 871. This bill establishes a workgroup on social worker examination requirements for licensure, staffed by the Maryland Department of Health, which must submit a preliminary report by December 1, 2023, and a final report by July 1, 2024. We graduate on average 450 MSWs each year and represent an extensive, skilled, and dedicated workforce of social workers in Maryland. We support all efforts to address the biased exam used by ASWB and to support our graduates and those from our sister schools from the burden of passing a problematic exam.

I am aware that the workgroup must (1) identify alternatives to examination requirements that may be used to assess an applicant's qualifications for a master social worker license, a certified social worker license, or a certified social worker-clinical license and (2) develop recommendations for an assessment method for independent practice to replace the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) examination. My hope is that this workgroup would result in rapid equity in the testing of our nation's and our state's social work and behavioral health workforce.

With Social Work workforce shortages across the nation, it is imperative for us all to work together to find responsible resolutions. I would be honored to serve on this workgroup as well as support whichever members are appointed. Should you have any questions that we can help to inform, please contact Dr. Judy L. Postmus at dean@ssw.umaryland.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in favor of SB 871 and for creating this workgroup to address the disparities in the exam taken by our graduates and those of our sister schools in the state of Maryland.

Respectfully submitted by



Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW, Dean & Professor
University of Maryland School of Social Work