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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 13th, 2024

SB106: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Board Membership and Certified Social Worker Licenses

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, Members of the Committee,

I am before you today to speak about SB106, a bill that clarifies the licensing of the State Board of Social Work Examiners, board membership, and certified social workers. It authorizes the board to include at least one member who is a licensed master social worker who is approved for independent practice. It makes clarifying changes and removes obsolete references to certified social workers' licenses, which are no longer issued.

This bill takes into account licensing changes and updating the statute regarding the State Board of Social Work Examiners. It also specifies that if a licensee of the specified license category is not appointed to the board within three months of a vacancy, a qualified licensee of any licensing category is otherwise qualified to be a member of the board.

SB106 is also aimed at ensuring the membership of the board is representative of social work licenses. Social workers approved for independent practice are at a similar level of licensure as a licensed certified social worker. They are required to complete the same number of supervision hours as the certified social worker to earn a license.

Today, you will hear from our expert witness, Adrienne Ekas, the Vice Chair of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners and Educational Representative to the board. In addition to her position on the Board, Ms. Ekas is the Assistant Dean for Field Education at the UMBC School of Social Work.

Thank you for your time today, and I urge a favorable report on SB106.

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February 13, 2024

Senate Bill 106

State Board of Social Work Examiners- Board Membership and Certified Social Worker Licenses

Senate Finance Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (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 out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

If passed, Senate Bill 106 would address the work of the State Board of Social Work Examiners. This legislation would also address the lack alteration of the membership of the State Board of Social Work examiners repealing obsolete references to certified social worker licenses. Social workers play a critical role in ensuring the safety, well-being, and permanency of children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Social workers support families in crisis and advocate for systemic changes to improve child welfare policies and practices.

MARFY is a nonprofit organization that relies on social workers and their voices to serve the vulnerable needs of our foster youth. Senate Bill 106 would support MARFY's efforts to make important changes in a more efficient and smooth placement process, to accurately accommodate our foster youth. Timely placements help maintain the enthusiasm and motivation for our members and providers. This legislation would be extremely helpful in protecting and serving Maryland's most vulnerable population.

Overall, social workers play a crucial role in promoting social justice, human rights, and well-being across diverse populations and settings. Their dedication,

compassion, and expertise contribute to building stronger, healthier, and more resilient individuals, families, and communities. **It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 106.**

For more information call or email:

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Position: FWA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners
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2024 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 106
COMMITTEE: FINANCE
POSITION: SUPPORT

TITLE: State Board of Social Work Examiners – Board Membership and Certified Social Worker Licenses

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill alters the membership of the State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) by including a licensed master social worker who is approved for independent practice. It also repeals obsolete references to certified social worker licenses.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board supports SB 106.

The certified social work license category is no longer being offered to applicants as of December 31, 2022. Therefore, references in statute to this license category, where appropriate, are being removed.

SB 106 is also aimed at ensuring the membership of the Board is representative of social work licensees. A social worker approved for independent practice is a comparable level of licensure as the licensed certified social worker (LCSW) and is required to complete the same number of supervision hours as the certified social worker to receive a license.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Social Work Examiners is respectfully requesting a favorable report on SB 106.

If you require additional information please contact Susan Coppage, Board Chair of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners at (410) 490-9933 or susan.coppage@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.