



# Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Dawn Gile

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

DATE: February 16, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 412 – *Mental Health Law – County Mental Health Advisory Committees – Membership*

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The Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) was established in 1975 to promote and advance the 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 412.

Senate Bill 412 would add “an individual with experience with mental health care for veterans or individuals serving in the military” to the list of persons that can be appointed as a voting member to a county mental health advisory committee. County mental health advisory committees serve as advocates for a comprehensive mental health system for persons of all ages. They are charged with determining the needs of county mental health systems, including quality of services, gaps in the system, budgetary items, and interagency coordination. The GWSCSW believes adding this position to the membership provides an important perspective as veterans’ mental healthcare needs have historically been overlooked or insufficiently addressed. Additionally, service members and veterans are often well-connected within their community and their insight into the challenges faced by this population can inform the committee’s efforts to develop inclusive and effective health policies. Veterans may experience a range of mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders, often compounded by the challenges of transitioning to civilian life. In order to address this population’s mental health needs, their input should be included in advisory committees. For these reasons, GWSCSW **supports** Senate Bill 412.

**For more information call:**

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