



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, Members of the Committee,

Today, I am here to present HB755, a bill designed to streamline and clarify the licensing and board membership processes for the State Board of Social Work Examiners, alongside updating the status of certified social workers. This legislation ensures that the board will include at least one licensed master social worker who is also approved for independent practice, enhancing the board's expertise and relevance.

HB755 does more than just update terminology; it removes outdated references to certifications no longer in use, aligning our practices with current standards. It reflects a thoughtful approach to evolving licensing dynamics and modernizes the statutes concerning the State Board of Social Work Examiners.

Additionally, the bill addresses the issue of board vacancies by allowing the appointment of a qualified licensee from any category if a specific vacancy goes unfilled for three months. This pragmatic measure ensures that the board's work continues seamlessly, without delay.

Importantly, HB755 aims to ensure that the board's composition accurately represents the diverse licensing categories within social work. It acknowledges that social workers approved for independent practice have met rigorous supervision requirements, similar to those of licensed certified social workers, underlining a commitment to high professional standards.

We are also privileged to hear from Adrienne Ekas today, the Vice Chair of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners and an Educational Representative on the board. Ms. Ekas brings a wealth of experience to this discussion, not only from her leadership role on the Board but also as the Assistant Dean for Field Education at the UMBC School of Social Work.

I thank you for your attention and earnestly advocate for a favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you,

Delegate Harry Bhandari

