

**Testimony of Bryan Victor, MSW, Ph.D.**  
**February 4, 2025**  
**Maryland Senate Finance Committee**

**In Support of Senate Bill 0379**

Good Afternoon Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Bryan Victor and I am an associate professor in the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. My research focuses in large part on social work licensure so I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today and offer testimony in support of SB0379.

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) often frames its exams as a blood pressure cuff or a thermometer that simply offers a quick reading of a test taker's competency.

Sticking with that framing, I'd strongly encourage you to issue a statewide recall for a faulty device. And let me explain why.

For decades research has indicated that the ASWB exams have serious flaws that render them an invalid measure of social workers' readiness to practice.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, to date, not a single peer-reviewed study has demonstrated that the exam can differentiate between qualified and unqualified social workers. That is, there is no evidence that the exams perform the exact function that Maryland is counting on the exams to perform in the licensure process.

In 2021, ASWB itself hired a researcher at Rutgers University to find evidence to support the use of its exams in the social work licensure process. When the researcher from Rutgers informed the organization there is no evidence that the exams work as advertised, ASWB characterized her

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<sup>1</sup> Albright, D. L., & Thyer, B. A. (2010). A test of the validity of the LCSW examination: Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?. *Social Work Research*, 34(4), 229-234.

Victor, B. G., McNally, K., Qi, Z., & Perron, B. E. (2024). Construct-irrelevant variance on the ASWB Clinical Social Work Licensing Exam: A replication of prior validity concerns. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 34(2), 217-221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315231188305>

Victor, B. G., Kubiak, S., Angell, B., & Perron, B. E. (2023). Time to Move Beyond the ASWB Licensing Exams: Can Generative Artificial Intelligence Offer a Way Forward for Social Work? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 33(5), 511-517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315231166125>

findings as “bleak”.<sup>2</sup>

Another reason to discontinue use of the ASWB exams is that the Association of Social Work Boards does not follow their own industry standards for product development. Experts note that the ASWB is not in compliance with The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing which guide the responsible development of exams like those produced and sold by the ASWB.<sup>3</sup>

Again, I urge you to issue a statewide recall on these defective ASWB products that artificially deplete Maryland’s behavioral health workforce in order to enrich an out-of-state, third-party vendor.

Thank you, and I encourage you to vote in support of the bill.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aswb.org/researchers-bring-much-more-than-a-lit-review/>

<sup>3</sup> The leading scholar on noncompliance is Matthew DeCarlo, MSW, Ph.D. at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. Standards with which the ASWB does not appear to comply include but are not limited to: Standard 2.14; Standard 2.15. and Standard 2.4. Noncompliance largely stems from either not completing required psychometric testing and/or not making data available for independent audit.