

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to offer my full support for Senate Bill 379, which seeks to repeal the examination requirements for bachelor and master social worker licenses in the state of Maryland. As a licensed social worker in Washington, D.C., I have personally experienced the challenges that come with these examination requirements, and I am deeply motivated to advocate for a change that will benefit both future social workers and the communities we serve.

In my own journey, I faced significant obstacles when attempting to pass the master's level social work exam. Despite my extensive academic background, my passion for helping others, and my years of practical experience, I found myself struggling to pass this exam. I failed the test twice before finally passing it on my third attempt. This prolonged process affected not only my career progression but also my confidence, self-esteem, and mental health. The weight of failure was not just about the inability to move forward in my professional career—it deeply impacted how I viewed myself as a social worker, despite my clear commitment to the field.

The examination process, in my view, does not truly assess the core qualities that make an effective social worker. Social work is not about rote memorization of facts and figures. It is about empathy, critical thinking, cultural competence, and the ability to build relationships with individuals and communities to drive social change. The current licensure examination requirements do not measure these essential skills. Instead, they focus on an artificial standard that stifles the growth and development of those eager to contribute positively to society.

Furthermore, failing to pass the exam as a barrier to entering the social work field disproportionately impacts individuals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds who may not have the privilege of additional test preparation resources or who experience test anxiety. This is a systemic issue that holds back those who could be making powerful, positive changes in our communities.

I believe it is crucial to prioritize real-world experience, compassion, and the capacity to make meaningful change in the lives of others over an arbitrary examination standard. Social workers who are equipped with the right tools, knowledge, and commitment to the profession should not be hindered by the exam process.

After my experience of passing the exam on the third attempt, I was motivated to become a strong advocate for future social workers. I am determined to ensure that the next

generation does not face the same unnecessary barriers I did, and that they have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to societal progress from the very beginning of their careers.

I urge the Maryland Senate Finance Committee to pass Senate Bill 379. Let us not allow an exam to stunt the growth of our future social workers or prevent them from making a profound impact on society. It's time to embrace a more holistic approach to licensure that better reflects the true essence of the social work profession.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dasia Adams (LGSW)

(Maryland District 6 Resident)