

Mounty Testimony SB379  
February 4, 2025

My name is Dr. Judy Mounty. I am a deaf licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Maryland, and a BSWE-approved supervisor. I am testifying in support of SB379, which will remove ASWB examinations as a requirement for the bachelor's and master's level licenses and add two consumer seats to the BSWE.

It is estimated that there are nearly 2 million Marylanders aged 12 years or older who are deaf or hard of hearing. They need social workers who are bilingual in American Sign Language and English and who share their lived experiences.

During 40-plus years of cross-disciplinary experience, I have witnessed the devastating effects of not passing licensing and certification examinations on the careers and lives of deaf and hard of hearing professionals. For many deaf and hard of hearing social work licensure candidates, the linguistic structure of the test items and cultural bias of the examination has impeded access to licensure, employment, ability to serve their population, and advancement in their profession.

I am not aware of ASWB or BSWE collecting data on the licensure status of deaf and hard of hearing social work candidates, but anecdotally, we know that a large percentage are not passing the test. Additionally, some candidates for licensure postpone or never take the test for fear of failing.

For a period of about 15 years, starting around 2000, I had a series of interactions with ASWB leadership. I explained the nature of the problem and asked for their support and assistance in collecting data and addressing the issues. The interest was there, but they expressed concerns about cost given the small size of our community. I have not found that they have made any substantive changes based on my recommendations, and their interest in collaboration waned over the years. As the Deaf social worker representative on the workgroup, I have not found ASWB to be interested in addressing the negative impact of their examinations on my population.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions you may have.

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