

February 4, 2025

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

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on SB379.

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

Maryland is facing a growing demand for social workers, particularly in mental health services. By eliminating the repealing examination requirements for bachelor and master social worker licenses, we could help increase the number of qualified professionals entering the field. We know that these individuals are qualified because of their baccalaureate or master's degree that they have obtained.

Social work is a field that relies heavily on practical skills, clinical experience, and interpersonal abilities, and we believe that fieldwork and degree completion are indicators of a social worker's ability, rather than standardized testing.

By removing unnecessary hurdles to licensure, we can help more qualified individuals enter the profession, and increase the number of social workers available to serve vulnerable populations in need of mental health services and support programs.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB379.

Kathryn S. Farinholt
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

Contact: Morgan Mills
Compass Government Relations
Mmills@compassadvocacy.com