

TO: The Honorable Beidle, Chair and Members, Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Daphne McClellan, PhD, LMSW
DATE: March 3, 2026
RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 874- Health Occupations - Social Workers - Scopes of Practice

I am writing in opposition to SB 874 which alters the scopes of practice for licensed social workers; and generally relates to the practice of social work in the State.

The purpose of this bill is unclear. The scope of practice for all four Social Work licensing categories was rewritten. A major overhaul of this Social Work practice act was undertaken in 2017 and implemented with appropriate regulations in 2019. Other aspects have been added since then. As you are aware, this is not a profession that has been neglected by the legislature.

I have worked in the arena of social work licensure in Maryland for twenty years. I served as the Exec. Dir. of the MD Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers from 2005 until my retirement in 2022. After my official retirement from NASW-MD, I served a short stint as the Exec. Dir. of the BSWE. In all those years, I never saw a bill seeking to make major revisions to social work, or any profession, without involvement of the professional association(s) and/or their licensing board. In the case of SB874 it appears that none of the official stakeholders- professional schools, professional associations, nor the licensing board were consulted as the bill was being developed. Personally, I find this very concerning and not in keeping with my previous experience with this body.

It appears that this legislation is being unnecessarily rushed through. As my colleagues and I have examined this bill, we have found a number of issues, which were then shared with the bill sponsors. This was done in an effort to show that there are many problems and to ask that the process be slowed down so the underlying concerns of the sponsor can be identified and we can all work together to address them in a careful and comprehensive way- resulting in a good bill without unintended consequences. I have seen amendments proposed by the sponsor and while I appreciate the effort to make corrections, in some cases they simply raise new concerns.

In closing, I wish to state that I am supportive of Maryland having the best possible Social Work Practice Act and I am sure that is Sen. Washington's goal as well. In my opinion, this bill is not fixable by amendments. Please consider tabling this bill and directing the BSWE to address clearly stated concerns during the interim, in collaboration with the profession. I would be honored to participate in this process so that a clean bill can be presented to you in 2027.

Please vote NO on SB 874.