

Daniel Rascovar
2026 UMB MSW Candidate
derascovar@gmail.com

Tuesday February 10, 2026

The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle
Senate Financial Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony

IN FAVOR OF

Senate Bill #18: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work - Revisions

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am currently a student at University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work and plan to graduate this summer.

As Social Workers we live by a code of ethics where we have a responsibility to our clients, colleagues, in practice settings, the Social Work profession, to the broader society, and as professionals.

Our responsibilities to our clients, colleagues, and in practice settings include competence and consultation. We agree to practice social work only within the realms of our competency and to receive and seek out consultation from social workers also maintaining within their competency. A test should not be the only deciding factor of competency when the field is full of deeply knowledgeable individuals specifically seeking out licenses that allow them to supervise others and pass on that knowledge.

Our responsibility to the social work profession and to the broader society is committing time and dedication to furthering education about the communities they're working in and about the profession as a whole. This knowledge is only attainable through in the field experience and continuing our education by taking courses that we can take back to the communities we work in.

Our responsibilities as professionals do not allow for discrimination in any form on a wide variety of things, but specifically on race, ethnicity, age, or mental or physical ability. We should not allow the only pathway of licensed practice to be a test that has been statistically proven to discriminate against race, ethnicity, age, and mental and physical ability.

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The statistics of the test being biased against people of color, people whose first language isn't English, older adults, and people with disabilities are there, even the ASWB can agree on that. As someone currently in school for their masters in social work, I have the wonderful opportunity to meet so many incredible up and coming social workers. It is so inspiring to be surrounded by people just as passionate as me about this profession. It is disheartening for me to hear how discouraged people in the program are about passing because they have test anxiety or fit into the test biases.

My fellow social work classmates are staples in their communities who have worked, lived, and contributed for over thirty years. They are people who are on their third master's degree because they noticed a need in their previous professions that they can't accomplish without pursuing a social work career. And they are people who just simply do not have the time, energy and resources to give to taking an exam. There needs to be an alternative path for social workers, we pride ourselves on being change makers, and this is a change that needs to be made. We want to work in Maryland, we want to serve our community. Please let us work in Maryland. Please vote yes for SB18, we need a conditional license that allows for incredible social workers to do what they do best in the communities, in the state, that we love.