

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D  
*Legislative District 43*  
Baltimore City and Baltimore County

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Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Education

Environment

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*Joint Committees*

Senate Chair, Administrative, Executive,  
and Legislative Review

The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal  
Bays Critical Areas

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Chair, Baltimore City Senate Delegation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**Written Testimony of Senator Mary Washington**  
Finance Committee  
February 10, 2026

**SUPPORT - Senate Bill 18**

*State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work -  
Revisions*

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 18.

Let me begin by acknowledging the Senate Finance Committee's leadership and thoughtful attention to the complex task of shaping licensure processes. Your efforts shape not only the quality and accessibility of healthcare in Maryland but also carefully balance the interests of practitioners, patients, and the public. Guiding these standards is no easy feat; it requires vision, diligence, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of all Maryland residents. Thank you for your dedication and partnership.

In its oversight of several professional boards, charged with ensuring that licensed professionals meet rigorous standards of education, practice, qualifications, and character, the Senate Finance Committee serves as the legislative body that guides and shapes this vital process.

Maryland continues to face a significant shortage of mental and behavioral health professionals. Social workers are indispensable across healthcare systems, schools,

community organizations, government agencies, and reentry programs. SB18 is designed to address the layered challenges and systemic barriers in the licensure process at both entry and mid-level practice, while upholding professional standards.

SB18 represents a positive step toward the balance the Committee and the General Assembly aim to achieve by revising the licensing process to better align with the profession's values, the realities of social work practice in Maryland, and public safety. As drafted, the bill does not alter the scope of practice, supervision standards, or the disciplinary authority of the State Board of Social Work Examiners. It preserves licensing by examination for those who wish to take it and does not change the Board's existing requirement that the standardized ASWB national examination be taken for clinical licensure (LCSW-C).

The approach we have taken has been field tested. In recent years, multiple states and jurisdictions, including Illinois, Utah, Minnesota, and Washington, DC, have adopted alternative pathways that emphasize supervised practice rather than examination at comparable licensure levels. These reforms have expanded the workforce without evidence of increased disciplinary or safety concerns.

I strongly believe that Senate Bill 18 is a solution for the many practicing social workers who wish to be in Maryland, and it improves our behavioral health workforce while safeguarding the public. I appreciate the Committee's thorough consideration of these issues and trust its judgment in refining the bill.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Senator Mary Washington  
Maryland State Senate, District 43