

Written Testimony

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

My name is Shelly McDowell-Porter. I am a licensed clinical social worker, a psychometrician, an educator, and an ally of the Association of Social Work Boards. I am here because I believe deeply in the relevance of licensure to the social work profession and to the protection of the public we serve.

Licensure matters. It signals professional accountability, shared standards, and readiness for complex, high-stakes practice. As someone who has taken the exam myself and later worked in exam development and evaluation, I want to be very clear: the social work licensure exam is built using rigorous, evidence-based psychometric processes. It is developed with care, multiple layers of review, and ongoing quality monitoring to ensure reliability, validity, and fairness.

At the same time, I want to acknowledge something equally important. I understand and respect the concerns raised by members of the community regarding bias and access in licensure testing. Those concerns are real, and they deserve to be taken seriously. Naming that reality does not undermine licensure; it strengthens it.

What I can say with confidence is this: the exam is developed with integrity, and the current leadership at ASWB genuinely cares about the betterment of the profession. There is a sincere commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, and to addressing inequities without compromising professional standards.

I urge you to consider any legislative changes with careful attention to preserving licensure as a meaningful, credible, and nationally aligned safeguard for the profession and the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.