



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Ave., 3rd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215

**2026 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO: SB 18
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support with Amendments

TITLE:

RE: SB 18 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work - Revisions

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill allows applicants to apply for a “conditional” Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) or Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) license without having to pass the national licensing examination, if they fulfill the requisite educational requirements, register with a board-approved supervisor, and acquire substantial practical experience. Additionally, applicants must have a Criminal Background Check prior to being licensed.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 18 with the following 6 amendments:

Amendment 1: Strike lines 23–29 on page 3: The Board strongly recommends the removal of the provision requiring consultation with an institution accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. This requirement introduces unnecessary complexity and may prolong the time between application submission and license issuance. Statutory authority to license and regulate the profession resides with the Board, not with educational institutions.

Amendment 2: On line 19, page 3, the Board would like to strike the “or” and substitute “and”.

Amendment 3: Revision of Required Practice Hours on line 20 on page 3: The Board would like to strike the 1,500 hours of supervised experience and allow it to set standards in consultation with other social work experts around the required number of practice hours. Lines 25-29 on page 3 should also be stricken.

Amendment 4: The Board has statutory authority to issue a “conditional” license if there are unforeseen circumstances that make the examination unavailable to an applicant. The bill seeks to remove the emergency language (lines 14-19, page 2) for which the Board would approve a conditional license. Removing the emergency language removes the need for the Board to issue a “conditional” license. And if the goal is to create a temporary license, the Board would prefer to use the term “limited” license to be consistent with many other health occupations boards, as well as other states who offer alternatives to the exam for licensure – for example, Michigan.

Amendment 5: Add language that states a “limited license” would not be eligible for the Social Work Compact multi-state license as passing a national examination is a requirement.

Amendment 6: Provide language that clearly states the practice hours earned under this “conditional license” cannot be used towards the required 3000 practice hours needed for the LCSW-C licensure under §19-302 of this article.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Social Work Examiners respectfully requests a vote of favorable with amendments on SB 18.

If you require additional information please contact Karen Richards, Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners at (410) 764-4722 or karen.richards2@maryland.gov or Lillian Reese, Board Legislative Liaison, at (443) 794-4757 or lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.