

JAMILA J. WOODS
Legislative District 26
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee
Criminal Subcommittee
Chair, Juvenile Subcommittee
Public Safety Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 206
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3544
800-492-7122 Ext. 3544
Jamila.Woods@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for HB769 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and esteemed members of the Health Committee.

For the record my name is Delegate Jamila Woods, and I am here to request a favorable report on House Bill 769, legislation to update Maryland's social work licensure process by revising the conditional license pathway for bachelor's and master's level social workers.

Maryland is experiencing serious workforce shortages in behavioral health and social services, and social workers are essential across hospitals, schools, community providers, child and family services, aging services, and reentry programs. At the same time, we see qualified graduates delayed or pushed out of Maryland because the current pathway into the profession is too narrow and, for many, unnecessarily restrictive. HB769 responds to the reality in front of us: we need to protect the public while also ensuring that our state can retain and deploy a well-trained workforce.

House Bill 769 makes three core improvements. First, it modernizes the conditional license statute, so it is not tied only to an exam "unavailability" scenario. Under current law, conditional licensing was treated as an emergency workaround when an exam could not be offered. This bill instead makes conditional licensure a defined entry pathway for initial applicants who have already met Maryland's education and experience requirements and are otherwise fully qualified, except for the exam requirement.

Second, HB769 reinforces public protection through clear guardrails. A conditional license holder may practice only within the scope of the license category issued—bachelor or master—and must practice under a Board-approved supervisor. The bill also places shared responsibility on both the conditional license holder and the supervising social worker to comply with supervision and expiration requirements. The conditional license is time-limited: it must be set by the Board for at least 12 months and no more than 24 months, it cannot be renewed, and it terminates automatically upon expiration or once the individual qualifies for and receives full licensure.

Third, the bill establishes two clear, accountable pathways from conditional licensure to full licensure. A conditional license holder can obtain full licensure by either achieving a satisfactory exam score, or by completing at least 1,500 hours of supervised practice during the conditional period, verified by a Board-approved supervisor and evaluated under standards established by the Board. Importantly, the bill requires the Board to adopt regulations that set minimum supervision requirements, reporting procedures, and standards for evaluating the supervised practice. Those

standards must be developed in consultation with an accredited institution that offers both a BSW and an MSW program—ensuring the oversight is anchored in accredited social work education and professional expectations.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of clarity, strong supervision requirements, and avoiding a two-tiered system. HB769 is designed to do exactly that: it does not create a lesser license or a backdoor around competence. It creates a structured, supervised, time-limited pathway for initial applicants who have already completed rigorous accredited programs and field education, and it relies on Board regulation to ensure consistent standards, documentation, and oversight.

Finally, HB769 strengthens legislative oversight and transparency. Beginning in 2026, the Board must report annually on the number of conditional licenses issued, the number of conditional license holders who obtain full licensure, and recommendations to improve implementation and impact on the health care workforce. That reporting requirement ensures the General Assembly can closely monitor outcomes and make adjustments if needed.

House Bill 769 is a practical, responsible workforce bill. It preserves public safety through supervision and Board regulation, while helping Maryland retain qualified social work graduates and fill urgent vacancies across our health and human services systems. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 769.

Sincerely,



Delegate Jamila J. Woods
Maryland House of Delegates
District 26 – Prince George’s County