

March 25, 2026

Testimony for House Health Committee

Re: SB0018 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work - Established

Position: Unfavorable

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Will Doyle. I am a clinical social worker, Maryland resident in District 21, and the Vice President of Housing First at Pathways to Housing DC.

I urge you to issue an unfavorable report on SB18. This is bad legislation with no basis in data. Instead the data suggests that social workers licensed under this bill are more likely not to pass the ASWB exam, which will cause them to lose not only their licenses, but their jobs. **Who in this Committee is willing to take responsibility for that outcome?** This bill will also not support progress toward filling the gap of 2,675 social workers in behavioral health settings by 2028 as identified in Maryland's Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment Report. Instead, models like DC's Educational Pathway provide an urgently needed solution. **What is this Committee doing to address this workforce shortage identified 17 months ago?**

This is a bill amended by a retiring Senate Finance Committee Chair who has not once met with advocates since social work licensure reform has been up for legislation in the 2023 session. This is a bill at odds with the support that the HGO Committee expressed for the Workgroup on Social Worker Licensure Requirements' recommendations in the 2025 session.

The narrative we have been hearing is that your Committee is supporting SB18 since the Senate Finance Committee will not support any reform to social work licensure that allows a pathway without passing an ASWB exam. Retaining the ASWB exams is not an alternative pathway. Passing SB18 does not provide a solution, rather it likely delays actual reform.

Before you use the Senate Finance Committee as a scapegoat, please remember that real reform proposed in 2023 passed the Senate Finance Committee, but was amended by the HGO Committee to solely create a Workgroup. The Workgroup affirmed the legislation proposed in 2023 through its nearly unanimous recommendations. In other words, the HGO's actions has delayed Workgroup recommended reform for at least 3 years already. **Who in this Committee is willing to commit to real reform in 2027 to mitigate the harm caused by the HGO's actions in 2023?**

Please do not pass SB18 or HB769. Commit to real reform grounded in data and the Workgroup's recommendations in 2027.

Sincerely,

Will Doyle, LICSW
College Park, MD
District 21
Vice President of Housing First
Pathways to Housing DC