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**RE: House Bill 769 State Board of Social Work Examiners Conditional License to Practice  
Social Work  
Letter of Opposition**

My name is Jillian Amodio. I am a licensed social worker and founder of Moms For Mental Health. I have dedicated my career to supporting children, families, adults, and communities across Maryland. I am writing in strong opposition to House Bill 769.

Licensure in professional fields, especially in the fields of medicine and mental health, is not a simple bureaucratic formality. It is a public safety mechanism and safeguard that helps to ensure quality care and professional accountability. When Maryland residents seek mental healthcare in moments of crisis, the person sitting across from them should without a doubt have demonstrated a standardized level of competence, ethical understanding, and professional readiness to provide these services.

HB 769 fundamentally alters that safeguard.

While the intent to address workforce shortages and administrative delays sounds good at face value, this bill, if passed, creates an alternate route to full professional authority without requiring the standardized competency benchmark that every licensed social worker in Maryland has historically been required to meet, and which is a pillar that upholds the exemplary focus on excellence in the field. Licensing examinations are not arbitrary hurdles and serve critical functions. These exams serve as standardized, statewide benchmarks to ensure minimum competency in ethics, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, crisis intervention, and legal responsibilities.

Social workers serve individuals who have experienced trauma, abuse, addiction, suicidal ideation, severe mental illness, and systemic oppression. In such high-stakes clinical situations, foundational knowledge must be guaranteed and accounted for. The licensing exam ensures a baseline mastery before independent practice authority is granted and should not be disregarded.

As with any other field, licensing in social work shows that a professional has met rigorous, standardized criteria. When alternate pathways bypass examination requirements, it threatens to weaken public trust in the credential itself and water down the work it takes to reach a level of excellence needed to serve in this field at this capacity. Every currently licensed social worker in Maryland has had to pass the required examination. Creating a pathway to full licensure without

that requirement introduces inconsistency, and raises fairness and ethical concerns within the profession itself.

Workforce shortages are real. Burnout is real. Access to care is a crisis. But lowering standardized professional benchmarks is not the solution.

As a mental health provider who has provided service to survivors of abuse, individuals in acute psychiatric crisis, and families navigating unimaginable stress, I can attest that the stakes in our profession are profound and licensure standards must always continue to reflect that gravity.

I respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider HB 769. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the health and safety of Maryland residents.

Respectfully,

Jillian Amodio, LMSW

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