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Wednesday February 16, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

House Bill #769: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Conditional License to Practice Social Work - Revisions

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. As improving equitable access to essential services is a key part of our mission, we strongly support House Bill 769, which we believe will take critical steps to ensure that marginalized Marylanders are able to obtain social work services from professionals who look like them, come from their communities, and understand their struggles.

Currently, Maryland requires licensed social workers to pass the Association of Social Work Boards Exam. Unfortunately, the ASWB Exam has been demonstrated to have significant racial disparities in passage rates, which have been demonstrated by researchers to be the result of racist assumptions baked into the test itself.

While other states, including Connecticut, Illinois, and Rhode Island have abolished the use of the test—with other states have never having required it in the first place—House Bill 769 does not outright abolish the state's use of the ASWB Exam, but instead creates an alternative path to licensure through a conditional license that may be made permanent upon the completion of 1500 hours of supervised practice as verified by a Board-approved supervisor. Far more than any test, this time under supervision will ensure that Maryland social workers are well-positioned to engage with and serve their communities, while still leaving in place the licensure-by-exam path currently available.

For these reasons, Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 769.