



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 as Amended

TITLE: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Provisional License to Practice Social Work - Established

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill allows applicants to apply for a “provisional” 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 for a period of at least 12 months, but not more than 24 months. Additionally, applicants will receive a full license upon completion of a satisfactory score on an examination. 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 as amended.

The Board currently has statutory authority to issue a “conditional” license if there are unforeseen circumstances that make the examination unavailable to an applicant. Hopefully this “conditional” license is unnecessary in the future but, if necessary, it is important to have this proactively written in statute, rather than reactively trying to address a problem in the moment.

A “provisional” license will allow Bachelor-level graduates and Master-level graduates to begin working, acquiring real world practical social work experience under supervision while continuing to prepare for the licensing examination, for a minimum period of 12 months, but not more than 24 months. This will allow graduates an opportunity to begin working upon graduation allowing them to realize the benefits of their education while simultaneously addressing a gap in service provisions that can be filled by supervised provisional workers.

Provisional licensed practice hours may be used toward the accumulated hourly requirement for Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) or Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) independent practice but may not count toward the accumulated hourly requirement to qualify for examination for the Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) license. A written supervision contract is required for practicing clinical social work between a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) with a full license and an approved Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) supervisor.

It is important to note a “provisional license” would not be eligible for the Social Work Compact multi-state license as passing a national examination is a requirement within the Compact language.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Social Work Examiners respectfully requests a vote of favorable as amended 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.