

Written/Oral Testimony

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Shelly McDowell-Porter. I am a Maryland resident since 2008 and a licensed clinical social worker. I have served as a clinician in military and healthcare settings. I also serve as a psychometrician and educator. I am an ally of the Association of Social Work Boards.

Licensure matters. It signals professional accountability, shared standards, and readiness for complex practice. As someone who has taken the exam and later worked in exam development and evaluation, I can state confidently that the social work licensure exam is built using rigorous, evidence-based psychometric processes. It undergoes multiple layers of review and continuous quality monitoring to ensure reliability, validity, and fairness.

At the same time, I understand and respect concerns regarding bias and access in licensure testing. Those concerns deserve serious attention. Acknowledging them does not weaken licensure. It strengthens it.

The exam is developed with integrity, and ASWB leadership remains committed to transparency, continuous improvement, and addressing inequities without compromising professional standards.

I urge you to consider legislative changes with careful attention to preserving licensure as a credible and nationally aligned safeguard for both the profession and the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time.