
Stacey L. Barker, Ph.D., LCSW

To: The Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Date: January 15, 2024

Re: LD1990 An Act to Improve the Licensing Procedure for Certain Social Workers by Removing the Examination Requirement

My name is Stacey Barker, and I live in Dexter. I have been a social work educator for more than 20 years, and I currently serve remotely as the Master of Social Work Program Director for a university in another state. *I support LD1990 and urge you to vote in favor of this legislation.*

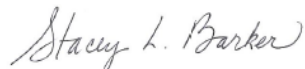
Data released in 2022 by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the company that owns and distributes the licensing exams, indicates major differences in pass rates for groups representing certain diverse demographics. There is no other way to interpret this data—social work licensing exams are biased and should not be a barrier to otherwise competent individuals who desire to fulfill important and much needed professional roles in society on behalf of our most vulnerable populations.

An individual who has successfully completed a social work educational program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has already demonstrated the level of competency needed to practice social work either at the bachelor's or master's level. Graduates of said programs have taken coursework in a variety of knowledge areas, including professionalism, ethics, human behavior, human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, research, social policy, and engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Graduates of accredited social work programs

have completed a significant number of field practicum hours (a minimum of 400 for BSW graduates and a minimum of 900 for MSW graduates) under the supervision of experienced social work practitioners and are evaluated for their ability to demonstrate social work competencies in those field practicums. An additional licensing exam is not necessary to ensure that individuals are 'ready' to be licensed. In fact, licensing exams and all the preparation that goes into studying for those exams, are costly and continue to contribute to inequities in who can identify as a professional social worker and practice therein.

Please vote to remove the examination barrier so that the full diversity of social work graduates who have already been vetted by social work educators and agency field personnel can quickly move into professional social work practice.

Sincerely,



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References:

Association of Social Work Boards. (2022). *2022 exam pass rate analysis: Final report*. Culpeper, VA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-ASWB-Exam-Pass-Rate-Analysis.pdf>

Council on Social Work Education. (2022). *Educational policy and accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master's social work programs*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>