



Letter of Testimony

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


Date: April 14, 2025


Re: LD1298 An Act Establishing Alternative Pathways to social Worker Licensing

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 LD1298 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 disparities 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, and social policy; in addition, graduates learn engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Graduates of accredited social work

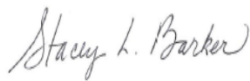




programs have completed a significant number of field practicum hours (a minimum of 400 for BSW graduates and a minimum of 900 for MSW graduates) under the supervision of experienced social work practitioners and are evaluated for their ability to demonstrate social work competencies in those field practicums. In my experience, those individuals are ‘ready’ to be licensed.

Please vote yes on this bill to remove the examination barrier by offering alternative pathways to licensure for those that aren’t able to pass the exam. We want the full diversity of social work graduates who have already been vetted by social work educators and agency field personnel to be able to move into professional social work practice.

Sincerely,



Stacey L. Barker

Dexter, ME

Staceybarker3851@gmail.com

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>

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