



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL
& FINANCIAL REGULATION
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION



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**TESTIMONY OF
PENNY VAILLANCOURT, DIRECTOR**

**OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION
IN SUPPORT OF LD 2074**

“AN ACT TO UPDATE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORKER LICENSURE”

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

PUBLIC HEARING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026 AT 1:30 PM

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Committee, I am Penny Vaillancourt, Director of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (“OPOR”). OPOR has 38 licensing boards and programs including the Board of Social Worker Licensure (“Board”). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of OPOR regarding LD 2074.

The Board’s sole statutory purpose is to protect the public and it does so by identifying minimum standards for licensure, investigating allegations of unprofessional or incompetent practice and imposing discipline when deemed appropriate. The Board issues licenses to qualified applicants. Currently, there are 8,361 actively licensed social workers in the following licensure categories below:

- 512 Licensed Social Workers – Conditional (LSX)
- 1,442 Licensed Social Workers (LSW)
- 248 Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)
- 629 Licensed Master Social Worker – Conditional Clinical (LMSW-CC)
- 5,335 Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- 1 Certified Social Worker – Independent Practice (CSW-IP)

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LD 2074 is a necessary first step in modernizing the regulations governing the qualifications for initial and renewal of licensure for all levels of social worker licensure. Current requirements and licensure pathways are preventing individuals who are otherwise qualified social workers from obtaining Maine licensure. Over the past several legislative sessions, there have been several proposals to address shortages in behavioral health services, and this is a comprehensive bill that would level set the minimum requirements for licensure and conditions to practice ensuring public protection. In addition, over the past year the Board of Social Worker Licensure has been conducting an extensive review of its existing rules to identify changes that would remove barriers to the licensure process which are also reflected in this proposal.

This bill proposes to make several changes as noted below:

- Sections 1 and 2: add licensure categories to the definition section to make consistent licensure references throughout the practice act.
- Sections 3, 4, 5, 7 and 12: make technical amendments to ensure consistency with licensure categories and consultation requirements.
- Section 6: clarifies that an applicant for LCSW licensure is not required to be actively licensed as a LMSW-CC for purposes of meeting the employment and consultation requirements. Rather, an individual who obtained the required consultation requirements either in Maine or in another state that are deemed equivalent by the Board can bring those qualifications forward as part of an LCSW application.
- Section 8: removes the employment and consultation agreement requirements for initial LMSW-CC licensure and instead requires the applicant to attest and acknowledge the consultation and social work experience requirements to practice as an LMSW-CC. This section also identifies the types of licensed individuals qualified to provide the consultation.
- Section 9: clarifies that an applicant for LSW licensure who has a degree in a field sufficiently related to social work and social welfare, passed the required examination and completed the required employment and consultation requirements is not required to be actively licensed as an LSX.¹
- Section 10: lists undergraduate degrees determined to be "in a field sufficiently related to social work or social welfare" in meeting the LSX requirements and extends the period of LSX conditional licensure from four years to six years.

¹ There are two pathways to LSW licensure: 1. A degree in social work and social welfare and passage of the examination; and 2. A degree in a field sufficiently related to social work and social welfare, passage of the examination plus consultation and social work experience hours earned as a LSX.



- Section 11: amends the consultation requirements for LSX and LSW licensure and clarifies the eligibility of the individuals qualified to provide the consultation regardless of practice setting.
- Section 13: repeals the differences in consultation requirements for non-DHHS and DHHS settings for LSX and LSW licensure. Amends the renewal requirements to grant discretion to the Board to waive certain requirements when an individual is seeking reinstatement of a license within a two-year period.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.

