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Governor

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January 25, 2024

Senator Donna Bailey, Chair  
Representative Anne Perry, Chair  
Members, Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1990, *An Act to Improve Licensing Procedure for Certain Social Workers by Removing Examination Requirement*

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information for the Committee's consideration regarding LD 1990, *An Act to Improve Licensing Procedure for Certain Social Workers by Removing Examination Requirement*. The Department would like to thank the sponsor and cosponsors for considering ways in which behavioral health and social service professionals, specifically social workers, may enter the field in an expedited manner. We are writing, however, to express the Department's opposition to removing the examination requirement for certain levels of licensure.

Holding an undergraduate or a graduate degree in social work does not indicate mastery of certain essential skills — particularly clinical skills. Standards such as the pre-licensure examination ensure that Mainers are being supported by a well-trained, appropriately educated, and credentialed workforce. Removal of this requirement would make it difficult to determine whether someone is qualified to hold licensure as a social worker, at any level, without an examination. The Department is concerned that harm could be done if a social worker with no clinical background is issued a license without examination and subsequently is permitted to conduct clinical practice and or direct care.

Importantly, being a licensed social worker is a requirement for employment as a child welfare caseworker. The Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) relies on that licensure to demonstrate competence. While, again, we support work to expand the workforce, it is important that that workforce is demonstrably qualified to conduct this important and high-stakes work.

While we agree that there is a need for more licensed social workers, it is unclear if this bill would increase workforce or if it did, if the quality of the workforce would decline resulting in ineffective services for children, adults, and families served.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Sarah Squirrell

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Sarah Squirrell

Director  
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