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My name is Annie Schneider and I am a school social worker with Portland Public Schools. We are in dire need of more mental health professionals in our Maine schools especially those that speak languages other than English. We are experiencing a growing number of students from West Central and South Africa, as well as South and Central America, whose primary languages are Portuguese, Spanish, French, or Lingala. These students often carry traumas related to migration and relocation, making it imperative for us to provide mental health services in their native languages. Additionally, having providers with similar backgrounds and life experiences is crucial for effective support. We cannot provide these services if the pathway to becoming a clinician prevents my colleagues from practicing due to the racist system that is the ASWB examination.

The existing system disproportionately affects our Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Multilingual colleagues, preventing them from pursuing successful careers in mental health. This is a direct contradiction to the Social Work ethics of Social Justice and Integrity that we strive to uphold.

As social workers, we are committed to challenging social injustice, and it is evident eliminating the ASWB examination is a crucial first step.