

University of Michigan School of Social Work supports HB 5184 and 5185. We do not wish to speak.

As Dean of the largest school of social work in the state of Michigan (and the top ranked school of social work in the country), I hear directly from our social work alumni that the licensing process is inequitable in Michigan. Addressing this issue through licensing reform is essential if we are to solve the found shortage of behavioral health clinicians at a time when Michiganders, especially children and youth, are experiencing alarmingly high rates of mental health problems. According to the Community Mental Health Association, CMH organizations are experiencing 20-40% vacancies in social work positions. Some of these shortages are attributed to an inability for some of their staff and candidates for social work positions to complete the current social work licensure process. In 2023, 63.9% of Michigan's Clinical social work candidates failed the ASWB exam. These bills will create a fairer, more accessible licensing process, including:

- New licensing tiers (LBSW, LMSW, and LCSW).
- A state-specific, affordable, open-book exam to replace the ASWB exam.
- Reduced supervision hours from 4,000 to 3,000 to align with national standards.

In a time where Michigan and the nation are in a behavioral health crisis, it is important that we are investing in our behavioral health workforce. The Social Work Licensure Modernization Act will help Michigan retain qualified social workers, addressing the urgent need for mental health professionals.

Please support House Bills 5184 & 5185.

Thank you,
Beth Angell
Dean
School of Social Work
University of Michigan