

Matt Carnagie

From: Ashley Seeley <ashley.orel@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 4, 2024 8:41 AM
To: Matt Carnagie
Subject: Support the Social Work Modernization Act

Dear Chair Brabec, Vice Chair Arbit, Vice Chair Schmaltz, and members of the behavioral health committee,

As a social worker in Michigan, I know that the licensing process is inequitable. I have experienced this first hand. Both in the exam process and the titles of the social work licenses in Michigan (LLMSW, LMSW-Clinical, LMSW-Macro) in comparison to other states (LMSW, LCSW).

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. This is unacceptable.

Additionally, the ASWB exam that is currently required has shown significant racial, age, and language bias, with nearly 70% of Black test takers unable to pass the exam the first time. We need social workers who represent their communities and clients. Social work has many other measurements of expertise, including graduate school, internships, and supervision after graduation, with a rigorous requirement of continuing education units during licensing.

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.

At its core, the Social Work Licensure Modernization Act aims to increase the number of licensed social workers in Michigan to help address workforce shortages, reduce unnecessary and/or problematic barriers, and bring Michigan in step with other national license legislative changes where these new tiers and removal of a biased exam would put us in line with how other states are already structured.

These bills have been with the committee for months without further action. This delay in action affects the profession of social work and the services clients receive.

Please support House Bills 5184 & 5185, and move these out of committee.

Thank you.

Regards,
Ashley Seeley, LMSW-Clinical
Holt, Michigan