

December 6, 2022
The Ohio Senate
Workforce and Higher Education Committee
HB 509

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Martin, and committee members:

As a licensed Ohio Social Worker and board member of the Ohio School Social Work Association, I would like to express strong opposition to HB 509 language on line 12858, specifically “A baccalaureate degree in social worker or another field acceptable to the board.”

I am in agreement with Senator Antonio’s amendment to remove the section of the bill that allows related degrees to be licensed as a social worker. I am also concerned that this language would impact Ohio’s ability to join the interstate compact.

As a licensed social worker, I value my education and training that I have received in my social worker degree program. Training as a social worker involves hundreds of hours of on the job experience, supervision, and learning that cannot be replaced by “another field.” Additionally, HB 509 would put clients at risk by lowering the standard of care and expertise of social workers. Ohio needs competent social workers, especially considering we are in the state of a mental health crisis according to the National Surgeon General.

This is an important matter to me and many social workers. Thank you for considering this written testimony.

Sincerely,

Leah A. Berdysz, LSW, MSSA