

The Ohio Senate
Workforce & Higher Education Committee
Re: Opponent Testimony for Substitute House Bill 509

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Martin, and Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to Substitute House Bill 509, which seeks to change current licensing requirements for social workers.

As a licensed social worker, graduate student at The Ohio State University College of Social Work, and student member of The Ohio School Social Work Association I am here to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes to social work licensing in Substitute House Bill 509. Social work is a specific profession with regulated standards for education, field practicums, and licensure. A degree from a related field likely carries no requirements for an internship meaning that an LSW could have no practical experience before becoming licensed. Furthermore, it devalues and disincentives earning a social work degree as a baccalaureate program requires 400 hours of field education and a master program requires 900 hours.

I urge the committee to adopt Senator Antonio's amendment to remove the section of the bill that allows related degrees to be licensed as a social worker. This is a public protection issue and an issue that would negatively impact Ohio as it would likely bar our state from joining the interstate licensure compact that is currently in progress.

I appreciate your attention to this issue to protect social work in Ohio.

Kalyn Jenner, BSSW, LSW