

February 10, 2025

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on this important issue. My name is Adrienne Newman. I have been practicing social work for 38-years. While I am a resident of Indiana and a licensed social worker in Tennessee, I am a Professor and the Director of Social Work Practicum Education in the Department of Family Science and Social Work at Miami University. I am writing as an individual and not as a representative of my employer, and I am unequivocally opposed to Senate Bill 1.

I am concerned for our bachelor and master level social work students (BSW and MSW) who are committed to assist diverse individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities in meeting their needs. Access and equity to participate in all realms of public and private life is a basic human right that cannot be denied. The perspectives of all regardless of their racial, cultural, ethnic, gender, ability, age, religion, experience, education and resources are critical. Social work students rely upon our department's curricula and openness in classrooms to encourage and foster speaking freely with peers, no matter what viewpoint is held. To become social workers, they must develop knowledge and skills through their courses, practical experience and collaborative dialog in the nine competency areas required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body of BSW and MSW programs.

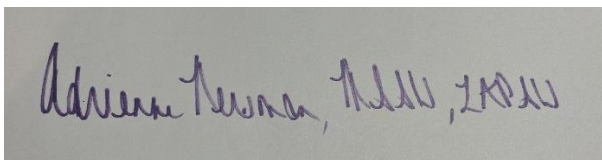
CSWE, the national association of social work education programs for the 800-plus accredited programs in the U.S. and its territories, states:

"The purpose of social work is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by... respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally."

CSWE urges legislators, who are seeking to constrain how topics such as diversity are taught in colleges and universities and who will, perhaps inadvertently, negatively alter social work education, to "consider the implications on accredited programs." CSWE's standards are not new. In fact, "requiring programs to achieve and maintain competency in the areas of diversity, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality has been central to social work accreditation standards since 1952." Requiring our programs to alter our CSWE-approved curricula in response to SB1 could potentially jeopardize our accreditation status, thus harming our students and their ability to achieve licensure and secure employment upon graduation.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I ask you to vote no on this bill which will have an extremely negative impact on your constituents – students, educators, and those who benefit from their interactions with social workers. Governor DeWine recognizes the critical importance of social workers to the health and well-being of our communities. As Ohio currently faces a behavioral health workforce shortage, social workers are greatly needed ([10/26/2023 | OhioMHAS Announces Comprehensive Plan to Address Ohio's Behavioral Health Workforce Challenges | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)). Please do not create barriers to us providing the best education possible to our students.

Sincerely,



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Social Worker, Social Work Educator
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