

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 Nichole Carr. I am a resident of Oxford, Ohio, and an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Science and Social Work at Miami University. Additionally, I am an independently licensed social worker in Ohio and have 20 years of direct practice experience in mental and behavioral healthcare. I am writing as an individual and not as a representative of my employer, and **I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1.**

I believe that SB1 is problematic for several reasons, but predominately I am concerned about the impacts of this bill on Ohio's Behavioral Health system workforce. Demand for behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services is increasing by 29% annually. While the behavioral health workforce has increased significantly (in part due to support from Governor DeWine) to meet this demand, all but three counties in Ohio show a workforce deficit. As of 2019, social workers account for a third of the licensed professionals who are working to address the behavioral health needs of Ohioans. BSW and MSW students rely on their social work programs to provide them with the meticulous preparation needed to be effective and highly competent practitioners who can address the needs of our Ohio communities. SB1 will hinder the ability of social work programs to ensure that students are able to meet the competencies put forth by our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Schools of social work are required to achieve and maintain competency in the areas of diversity, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality. This ensures social work students graduate with the skills and knowledge to address a wide variety of individual, family, community, and organizational needs. SB1 would require programs to alter CSWE-approved curricula which could impact our accreditation status. Students who do not graduate from an accredited social work program are not eligible for licensure which limits employment opportunities. A lack of licensed social workers would have a **detrimental impact on Ohio's workforce**, particularly the behavioral health care system.

**I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.** Social workers are working to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Ohio's communities. Please help us graduate more social workers who can enter Ohio's workforce and address the needs of your constituents. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nichole Carr", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nichole J. Carr, DSW, LISW-S  
Oxford, OH