

Chairman Roegner and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah A. Webb, and I am a Licensed Independent Social Worker with Supervision designation (LISW-S), licensed by the Ohio Counselor, Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapist Board, currently working as a faculty member at a public university in Ohio teaching social work courses. I stand in opposition to Senate Bill 1 because the reaches of this bill go far beyond Ohio's higher education system and cause harm to many Ohioans. The impact will negatively affect my ability, and the ability of all those who teach in social work programs, to prepare social work students to serve Ohio's most vulnerable individuals and families. It will also cause the state of Ohio to lose a vital part of its workforce. I believe the economic and social cost of this bill is not in the best interest of the state of Ohio.

If this bill would pass, social work programs in universities across Ohio accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) would not be able to teach CSWE required content related to diversity equity and inclusion resulting in a loss of CSWE accreditation. The loss of CSWE accreditation would mean that students who graduate with a social work degree would not be able to obtain a license to practice social work, because they would no longer be eligible to take the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam(s). This is the exam that allows those with social work degrees the ability to be licensed as social workers. ASWB does not allow students from non-CSWE accredited universities to take the licensing exam.

The loss of licensed social workers would result in an increase to the well-documented behavioral healthcare workforce shortage in Ohio. It will also cause social work students, both in and outside of Ohio, to take their tuition dollars to universities outside of Ohio to seek a CSWE accredited university to complete their social work degree(s), so that they would be able to obtain a license to practice social work. Additionally, Medicaid, Medicare and many private insurers require a provider to have a social work license to receive payment for services. Both the economic and social impact of not being able to seek payment for needed services that social workers provide would prove to be most damaging for Ohio. Federal agencies like the Department of Veterans Affairs and organizations like Nationwide Children's Hospital utilize licensed social workers to provide a large portion of their behavioral healthcare services. I do not believe there is anyone on either side of the aisle wants to cause undo harm to Ohio's Veterans and Ohio's children. In the best interest of Ohio, I strongly urge you to oppose SB1.