



Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board

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Testimony before the House State and Local Government Committee

October 13, 2021

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee, I am Brian Carnahan, Executive Director of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

Thank you on behalf of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (CSWMFT Board) for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony and address any questions you may have regarding the Board and its public protection role. The Board's Occupational Licensing Review Questionnaire submitted in June 2021 outlines the Board's role and responsibilities, providing a good perspective on the Board. I would like to take moment to provide a brief overview of the Board.

Overview of Board:

The mission of the CSWMFT Board is to protect the citizens of the State of Ohio through the licensure of Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists. The Board does this through the establishment of licensure and practice standards for the practice of counseling, social work, and marriage and family therapy. The Board accomplishes its mission through a 15-member board composed of licensed professionals and public members that establishes the minimum requirements for competency for entry into three separate but related licensed professions numbering nearly 42,000 licensees and registrants. You or your family have likely been assisted in some capacity by a licensee of the CSWMFT Board. Board licensees are working in a broad range of settings including schools, hospitals, nursing homes, mental health agencies,

hospice, and private practice settings. They provide services and assistance to those dealing with addiction, mental and emotional disorders, or simply challenges navigating the difficulties of life.

The Board has the statutory authority to grant licenses and registrations, which also involves establishing and enforcing practice standards and codes of conduct. CSWMFT oversees the administration of professional examinations through vendor partners. To ensure appropriate continuing competence, the Board approves continuing education programs and providers necessary for meeting continuing education requirements. The Board also investigates violations of the laws and rules governing the practice of Counseling, Social Work, and Marriage and Family Therapy. If a licensee or registrant is found to have violated the laws and rules, appropriate action is taken by the Board to address the violation and ensure the public is protected.

The Board is committed to balancing protecting the public, ensuring access to services, and supporting the ability for persons interested in pursuing these professions to do so with as few barriers as possible. To support this commitment, the Board participates actively in national organizations to ensure it has the information necessary to operate effectively as well as to shape how the professions are regulated.

The CSWMFT Board supports efforts to establish compacts. For example, Senate Bill 204 has been introduced. When enacted into law SB 204 will allow Ohio to join the new counseling compact. The Board is supportive of this legislation and looks forward to legislation based on a social work compact currently under development. These compacts will facilitate license transfers and practice between states, which benefits clients and professionals alike. The Board also regularly seeks efficiencies in the licensure, the Administrative Code Rules, and the Board's operating to ensure licensure is not an inappropriate burden on licensees and applicants.

I look forward to answering your questions.