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November 29, 2022

The Ohio Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee

Re: HB 509, line 12858 regarding social work title protection

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Martin, and committee members, as an Associate Professor in the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University, I am here to express the college's strong opposition to the proposed changes to social work licensing in HB 509. We are asking you to oppose the proposed language listed on line 12858 as underlined here: "**A baccalaureate degree in social work or another field acceptable to the board.**"

My testimony today is based on my pedigree, social work experiences, and position as a social work professor. I have a bachelor, master's and doctorate in social work and have been licensed as a social worker since 1995. I have taught social work students at the BSSW, MSW, and Doctoral levels since 1991. As a social work professor who has been intimately involved with social work curriculum development for over three decades, I have a deep understanding of the profession's accreditation standards, implicit and explicit curricula, and the profession's historical and contemporary mission to promote social, racial, economic and environmental justice, and to advocate and serve the disenfranchised. Social work goes beyond "helping" people. We have a very unique charge as a profession. Social work is a profession guided by a set of values and nine competencies taught in social work programs that are coupled with an intense practicum experience under the direct supervision of licensed social workers. **There is no related field to social work.** Social work is a trail blazer and a stand-alone profession. College graduates cannot be prepared to practice as social workers unless they graduate with a social work degree from a program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

For instance, our values, as espoused by NASW include service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry. Our competencies, as mandated by the Council on Social Work Education include:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities



There are no other professionals out there who are taught and trained in these values and competencies and are expected to demonstrate comprehension in them while engaging in justice-centered micro, mezzo and macro practice. Again, **there is no related field to social work.**

In 1915, Abraham Flexner stood in a crowded room at a conference and asked if social work was a profession. He questioned our science, intellectual operations, knowledge building methods, soundness of educational experiences, self-organizing tendencies, and altruistic motivations. His criticisms were cringeworthy. Since that time, social workers across the country and the world have worked tirelessly to distinguish social work as a unique discipline. We have accomplished an identity like no other. Our values, competencies, educational experiences, scientific inquiries, and mission set us apart from others. Yet again, we are under attack and told that there are acceptable degrees that are counterparts to social work. This assertion is egregious, incredibly hurtful, harmful, and potentially damaging to the profession's reputation. **There is no related field to social work nor any acceptable substitutes for social work trained professionals and all language that asserts that it is must be removed from HB 509.**

I need your help and voice in protecting social work as a title in Ohio. Thank you for listening to my testimony

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn C.A. Meshelemiah, BSSW, MSW, LSW, PhD, CAAP
Associate Professor of Social Work, Scholar Activist