

December 6, 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 a licensed social worker in the state of Ohio I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed changes to social work licensing in HB 509; specifically, the proposed language that states “A baccalaureate degree in social work or another field acceptable to the board.” Senator Antonio’s office has worked to draft an amendment to the bill that removes the above language, and we ask that you support the amendment.

To have a license in social work a person must have a degree in social work which includes appropriate education and training on social work practice. The proposed language ends title and practice protection for social workers in Ohio. This means that the public could no longer know if a “licensed social worker” has the appropriate training and experience to provide quality care. This diminishes our professional standing and reputation.

Licensed social workers can diagnose and treat mental health disorders and if the proposed language passes a person could be diagnosed and treated by someone who has no knowledge of mental health diagnosis or treatment plans. This would result in serious harm to anyone experiencing mental health concerns.

I have had strong education and experiences that helped me prepare to be an effective and positive social worker. The education and experience have allowed me to feel competent in difficult and unexpected situations. My education gave me the tools to know how to diagnosis and treat mental health diagnosis. My experience gave me the practical skills to know how to apply the education I received.

Social workers are critical to the health and safety of the public and there is no related field to social work. It is imperative that social workers have the appropriate training and resources before becoming licensed which can only be accomplished through a degree in social work.

I appreciate you protecting social work in Ohio.

Thanks,

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