



WORKFORCE AND
HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 12/6/2022

Name: Hannah Schaich

Address: 6240 Seven Pines Dr.
Dayton, OH 45449

Telephone: 513-384-0852

Organization Representing: NASW Ohio

Testifying on Bill Number: 509

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

Written testimony is a public record and may be posted on the Ohio Senate's website

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,

My name is Hannah Schaich and I am a Licensed Independent Social Worker in the State of Ohio. I am writing to you today on behalf of my profession to express a strong opposition to the proposed changes to social work licensing in HB 509. I am asking that you consider the amendment proposed to change the language on line 12858 as underlined here: "A baccalaureate degree in social work or another field acceptable to the board." I am grateful to Senator Antonio's office for working to draft an amendment to the bill to do so and I ask that you support this amendment.

This proposed language would end title and practice protection for social workers in Ohio. Currently to have a license in social work you must have a degree in social work. The public could no longer trust that a "licensed social worker" is indeed someone with a degree in social work, eroding our professional standing and reputation. Social work is the only profession that is listed in HB 509 that has these changes to who can become licensed, unfairly targeting social workers and undermining our professionalism.

Social work is a unique profession with specific standards for education, field experience, and licensure requirements. Degrees from related fields are unlikely to have these requirements for their students which could mean that a licensed social worker could enter the field with no hands-on experience in the field. This change devalues earning a social work degree with the requirement to have 400 hours of field education in a bachelor program and 900 hours in a master program.

There are no "related fields" to social work. Social work is social work and is a unique field of practice. Ohio has historically taken the position that title and practice protection are important. In 2012, the state removed the ability for people who earned related degrees before 1992 to become licensed. This language change not only returns the state to one without title protection, it also puts vulnerable populations at risk by not requiring social work training for social work licensure.

Lastly, it is extremely important to note that this proposed change would remove Ohio from compliance with the ASWB exam, requiring Ohio to seek a waiver to allow non-social work degree holders to be able to take the national exam. ASWB may not permit Ohio to have such a waiver which would deny non-degreed social workers from being licensed. People with degrees in non-social work fields would be ineligible in most other states to become licensed as other

states are maintaining this title protection. This would likely bar Ohio from being able to participate in the interstate licensure compact if Ohio does not meet the minimum requirement to ensure that licensed social workers are indeed social work degree holders. This would bar Ohio from allowing a contract with another state to allow social workers to practice in either jurisdiction to ensure that individuals that need social work assistance are able to receive it if there is a shortage of practitioners in their state.

As an individual who holds this profession close to my heart and values the work that myself and my colleagues do daily, I ask that you please reconsider this language. I attended six years of post-secondary education to get to where I am today and I can attribute my skill set to not only the education I received, but the hands-on practicum hours I was required to complete as a result of my education. In a society where mental health issues are continuing to rise post-pandemic, the public needs assistance from reputable, educated, and licensed individuals that have the skill set that can only come from the education provided by a degree in social work.

I want to thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I appreciate your attention to this issue to protect social work in Ohio.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Schaich, LISW". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hannah Schaich, LISW

Licensed Independent Social Worker

hannahschaich24@gmail.com

513-384-0852