

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D.
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair

Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Chair

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



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SUPPORT – SB 597
State Board of Social Work Examiners - Revisions
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 16, 2021
Testimony of Senator Mary Washington

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to vote favorable with amendments on Senate Bill 597, which makes several necessary changes to the Maryland Social Workers Act.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners recently completed a comprehensive review of the Board's statute. The following are the Board-approved changes to the current statute:

- (1) The removal of dates that are no longer relevant and the addition of updated dates throughout the statute;
- (2) The incorporation of the term "behavioral health" to replace the word "mental" where appropriate;
- (3) The deletion of language for the category of licensed graduate social workers (LGSW), which no longer exists;
- (4) Changing the 3 designated Board seats, as currently stated under Health Occupations Article § 19-202(a)(2)(i)1–3, Annotated Code of Maryland, to be licensed social workers of any licensed category;
- (5) Reduce the number of required supervised clinical practice hours from 144 to 100 to conform to the number of hours required by neighboring states (such as DC, Virginia, Delaware and New York);
- (6) The Social Worker Rehabilitation Committee, which is currently obsolete, has been changed to the Social Worker Rehabilitation Process;
- (7) Under Health Occupations Article § 19-407, Annotated Code of Maryland, the maximum fine was amended to reflect an increased limit on the possibility of a fine for

conviction of a licensee consistent with other State laws that have previously raised the level of the fine;

(8) a delay in the requirement for criminal background checks from 2021 to 2023;

(9) Correct the name of this act from the “Maryland Social Workers Act” to the “Maryland Social Workers Practice Act”; and

(10) Make other clarifying changes to correct obsolete language.

With the support and input of the Board in drafting this bill, I believe the changes reflect current practice, will facilitate mobility for social workers practicing in neighboring states, and will give additional time for social workers to complete criminal background checks.

For these reasons, I ask you for a favorable report on SB597.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Senator Mary Washington, District 43, Baltimore City