



March 21, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Senate Finance Committee
3 East - Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Oppose – House Bill 694: Labor and Employment - Workers' Compensation - Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical

Dear Chair Griffith and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPW/WPS oppose House Bill 694: Labor and Employment - Workers' Compensation - Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (HB 694). Social workers lack the training and licensing to determine disability in a workers' compensation case. Determining disability in a workers' compensation case typically requires a comprehensive understanding of medical conditions and their impact on an individual's ability to work. Such conclusions are typically the domain of medical professionals, such as physicians and other healthcare professionals. In fact, the evaluations utilized to determine causality and Impairment Ratings in Workers' Compensation cases are called Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs). Physicians can become Board Certified as IMEs as an option.

Social workers may have a role in a workers' compensation case in terms of providing support and resources to injured workers, such as helping them navigate the workers' compensation system, providing counseling and emotional support, and connecting them with community resources. However, social workers are not qualified to make medical determinations regarding disability or provide medical treatment.

In short, while social workers may have a valuable role to play in workers' compensation cases, determining disability rating is typically outside the scope of their training and expertise. We must remember that these disability ratings have lifelong legal and financial implications for the



injured worker and should be as thorough and accurate as possible. This role should remain reserved for medical professionals with the appropriate education and licensing.

For all the reasons above, MPS/WPS urges this honorable committee to give an unfavorable report to HB 694. If you have any questions concerning this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee