



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 807

PRINTERS NO. 2338

PRIME SPONSOR: McIlhinney

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2014/15	FY 2015/16
Professional Licensure Augmentation Account	See "Fiscal Impact"	See "Fiscal Impact"

SUMMARY: Amends the Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act to create an optional bachelor level license for social workers and eliminate the existing provisional social work license. This legislation would take effect in 60 days

ANALYSIS: This legislation amends the Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act (Act 39 of 1987) to do the following:

- Defines "Practice of Bachelor Social Work" as basic generalist nonclinical practice that includes interviewing, planning, case management and client education.
- Provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to hold himself or herself as a "licensed bachelor social worker" until having obtained a license pursuant to the act.
- Requires an applicant, in order to qualify for a bachelor social work license, to: 1) be of good moral character; 2) hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited program of social work or social welfare; 3) pass an examination adopted by the board; 4) submit an application and fee as established by the board; and 5) not be convicted of a felony drug offense.
- Establishes specific limitations on bachelor social work licensees. They are not authorized to diagnose mental illness, provide psychotherapy services, practice in a private setting, practice independently, engage in clinical social work practice, hold themselves out as licensed social workers or licensed clinical social workers, or bill a health insurance plan for services rendered. They are required to work under a supervisor who directs their activities.
- Removes all references in the act relating to the provisional social work license.
- Provides that only those holding a bachelor social work license may use the title "licensed bachelor social worker" and use the abbreviation "L.B.S.W."
- Directs the board to promulgate regulations to implement the legislation within 6 months of the effective date.

FISCAL IMPACT: This legislation would require the Department of State to develop a new application and license for a new classification of licensure (licensed bachelor social workers). The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors would be required to hire additional staff to implement this new licensure category, which could prove to be the largest class of license issued by the Board. There are 31 colleges in Pennsylvania that offer bachelor level programs in social work. The number of graduates in social work programs has increased nearly 10% in less than five years, and labor statistics indicate that this is a growing field. According to the Department of Labor and Industry's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, this occupation is expected to grow by 25% from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations.

The Department conservatively estimates that approximately 4,800 individuals with a bachelor's degree would request licensure. The assumption is based on the belief that only those individuals who graduated within the past 5 years would apply. However, assuming a 20-year career, there may be the potential for up to 20,000 licensees in this category.

The estimated total personnel and operating costs are \$446,440. These costs would be offset by a biennial cost per license at a price of \$186. Personnel costs are \$416,368 and include the following positions: 3 Clerk Typists, 3 Professional Conduct Investigators 1, 1/3 time for Attorney 3, 1/2 time for Attorney 2, 1/6 time for Legal Assistant for Prosecution, 1/4 time for Legal Assistant Board Counsel, and 1/4 time for a Paralegal. The estimated operating costs are \$30,072 for leased office space, workstations, furniture, computers, phones and other office supplies.

The Department also notes that office space at One Penn Center, which houses the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA), is at capacity. Hiring additional staff, due to the creation of new licensing boards or licensee classes, may require a negotiation of the current lease to obtain additional office space. If space is not available, the Department would have to secure a new work location for BPOA boards and commissions, resulting in added costs to all boards and commissions under the Bureau. These costs would be in addition to the costs provided in this analysis.

This legislation would have no adverse fiscal impact on the General Fund.

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House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: October 1, 2014

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.