

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
FISCAL NOTE**

**BILL NO.** Senate Bill 807

**PRINTER'S NO.** 1594

**AMOUNT**

No Fiscal Impact to the Commonwealth

**FUND**

General Fund  
Professional Licensure Augmentation Account

**DATE INTRODUCED**

April 4, 2013

**PRIME SPONSOR**

Senator McIlhinney

**DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL**

Senate Bill 807 amends Act 136 of 1998, the Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act, to create a voluntary license for individuals who graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work or social welfare from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

The definition of "licensed bachelor social worker" is added and is a social worker who holds a current bachelor's level license under the act. The bill removes all provisions for a provisional social work license and adds the following requirements for an applicant to qualify for a bachelor social work license:

- 1) The applicant must be of good moral character;
- 2) The applicant must have received a bachelor's degree from an accredited program of social work or social welfare;
- 3) The applicant must have passed an examination adopted by the Board;
- 4) The applicant must have submitted an application, accompanied by an application fee;
- 5) The applicant may not have been convicted of a felony for any drug or alcohol offenses, unless ten years have elapsed from the date of the conviction, the applicant has demonstrated significant rehabilitation and won't pose a risk to their clients, and otherwise satisfies the qualifications contained in the act.

The bill places limitations on the bachelor social work license. The bill specifically states that licensed bachelor social workers are not qualified to diagnose mental illness nor provide psychotherapy services. They must work under a supervisor who directs their activities. They may not practice in a private setting, practice independently, or engage in clinical social work or hold themselves out as licensed social workers or licensed clinical social workers. A bachelor social worker may not bill a health insurance plan for services rendered under this license.

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## **FISCAL NOTE**

The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors (the State Board) shall add licensed bachelor social workers to the licensees who must comply with the regulations governing codes of ethical practice and standards of conduct.

The State Board shall promulgate regulations to carry out the provisions in this act within 180 days of the effective date of the act.

The act shall take effect in 60 days.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Department of State estimates that there will be at least 750 applicants for the bachelor social worker license each year who have newly graduated from the 31 social worker programs offered by colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. In addition, currently practicing bachelor social workers will apply but the number who will apply is not known but expected to be substantial. This quantity of applicants may necessitate additional staff to handle the workload, especially in the first year. However to cover the increased cost for the additional staff or any other related expenses, the Board will have the authority to set a license/registration fee by regulation to cover all costs associated with the implementation of this legislation. Therefore, no additional cost to the Commonwealth is expected to result from the passage of this legislation.