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HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH KURTZMAN ROOM  
WILLIAM PITT UNION BUILDING  
3959 FIFTH AVENUE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15213  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2008

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Reported by: Lois Sikoski  
Court Reporter

1 Committee Members:

2

3 Michael Sturla  
4 Joint Professional Licensure Committee,  
5 Chairman

6 Shawn Ramaley 18th District, Beaver County and  
7 Allegheny County

8 Tim Solobay, 48th District, Washington County

9 Nick Kotik, 45th Legislative District,  
10 Allegheny County

11 Michael Andrew Shimkus, 143rd Legislative  
12 District Lackawanna County, City of Scranton

13 Daryl Metcalf, 12th Legislative District,  
14 Butler County

15 Craig Dally, North 135th Legislative District  
16 Hampton County

17 Richard R. Stevenson, 8th Legislative  
18 District, Butler and Mercer County

19 William F. Adolph, Jr., Minority Chair  
20 165th Legislative District Delaware County

21 James Wansacz, 114th Legislative District  
22 Lackawanna County Wyoming County Luzerne  
23 County Susquehanna County Representative

24 Keith Gillespie, 47th Legislative District  
York County

Stan Saylor, 94th Legislative District  
York County

Richard R. Stevenson, 8th Legislative District  
Butler and Mercer County

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(10:00 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN STURLA: I would like to call this meeting of the House Professional Licensure Committee meeting to order. We're here to discuss House Bill 2352 which deals with social workers.

I also have some testimony that I want to submit for the record, a letter from Basil Merenda, who is the Commissioner of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs. So we'll submit that for the record.

And then we'll begin with our panel of Jenna Mehnert and Patti Ward.

While they're coming up, I would like to get the members to introduce themselves. We'll start down this end.

REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Representative Dan Saylor, the 94 District of Berks County.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Good morning, everybody. Keith Gillespie, 47th District of York County.

CHAIRMAN STURLA: I'm Representative

1 Mike Sturla. I'm in the 96th District in  
2 Lancaster. And I'm Chair of the Professional  
3 Licensure Committee.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Good morning,  
5 my name is Bill Adolph, Delaware County, I'm  
6 with the 56th District. I'm the Republican  
7 chair.

8 REPRESENTATIVE SOLOBAY: Tim Solobay.  
9 I'm from the 28th District down in Washington  
10 County.

11 REPRESENTATIVE KOTIK: Nick Kotik,  
12 45th Legislative District, Allegheny County.

13 CHAIRMAN STURLA: You could begin.

14 DR. MEHNERT: Good morning, Chairman  
15 Sturla, and Chairman Adolph, members of the  
16 committee, and staff.

17 My name is Jenna Mehnert. I'm the  
18 Executive Director of the Pennsylvania  
19 Chapter of the National Association of Social  
20 Workers. I represent over 6,000 degreed  
21 social workers who reside throughout the  
22 Commonwealth. With 40 accredited social work  
23 programs such as the bachelor and master's  
24 programs offered here at the University of

1 Pittsburgh, there are an estimated 40,000  
2 degreed social workers here in Pennsylvania.  
3 The mission of NASW is two-fold. We exist to  
4 advocate for professional social workers. But  
5 true to the values of my profession, NAWS-PA  
6 is equally committed to the development of  
7 sound social policy. At times advocating for  
8 professional social workers and advocating for  
9 sound social policy can be a difficult  
10 balancing act. But, in the end, the interests  
11 of consumers should drive all policy change.

12 I'm here today to talk about how we  
13 can improve social service delivery within  
14 the front-lines of our various social  
15 services systems. And I'm not here to  
16 protect turfs or to be territorial. Having  
17 functioned in various direct practice roles,  
18 including as a rape crisis a hotline  
19 supervisor, a weekend relief counselor at a  
20 battered women's shelter, a child welfare  
21 worker, and a juvenile probation officer, I  
22 am here today to focus on improving quality.

23 It is all too easy to be critical of  
24 the decisions people make in front-line

1 work. Real people suffer huge consequences  
2 when front-line human service professionals  
3 fail to do their job effectively. The  
4 evidence of these failures often reach the  
5 front pages of local papers, as is happening  
6 right now in Philadelphia, all across the  
7 Commonwealth. In fact, disabled people die  
8 in personal care homes, children are molested  
9 and beaten in abusive homes, families are  
10 devastated by inappropriate removals, or  
11 children murder after treatment programs fail  
12 to address the root cause of their anger.  
13 Our society suffers an immeasurable human and  
14 skyrocketing fiscal costs because social  
15 services are not uniformly delivered by  
16 appropriate professionals.

17 If I was to provide any one of you  
18 with a manicure or a haircut in a public  
19 space for payment, I would need to be  
20 licensed. If I want to sell you a car at a  
21 car dealership, I have to be licensed as a  
22 vehicle salesperson. And, when I am dead, a  
23 licensed funeral home director will care for  
24 my body. But, if someone were to come into

1 my home to decide if I am a fit mother, they  
2 would not be licensed. And if my 76-year-old  
3 mother was to be raped and went for crisis  
4 counseling, the person speaking to her would  
5 most likely not be licensed; and, when we  
6 send dependent children to residential  
7 treatment facilities for services in hopes of  
8 reversing some of the horrific damage that  
9 has been done to them, the individuals  
10 working with those children every day will  
11 not be licensed.

12 I must ask you to think about what the  
13 lack of a direct human services license says  
14 about the value we place on people,  
15 especially, children, elderly, poor and  
16 victimized and fragile people. Licensure  
17 exists to protect consumers. How can it be  
18 we are protecting folks who are getting  
19 haircut, manicures, or buying a car, but not  
20 protect those who are receiving social  
21 services?

22 Licensure raises the bar. It requires  
23 appropriate education. It requires  
24 individual to be able to demonstrate a

1 knowledge base by passing an exam. It  
2 mandates continuing education, and creates a  
3 professional standard.

4 How can we expect good outcomes if  
5 Accounting, English, History majors, in the  
6 case of Philadelphia, are making up the front  
7 lines of our social services. I mean no  
8 insult to those individuals, but am simply  
9 making a point. None of you are foolish  
10 enough to allow me to operate on your foot  
11 without a medical degree and training, so why  
12 are we allowing inappropriately educated and  
13 non-trained individuals to fulfill some of  
14 the most difficult social service roles in  
15 our society.

16 I'm delighted to be here in Pittsburgh  
17 with the members of the House Professional  
18 Licensure Committee to ask each and every one  
19 of you to support bachelor-level human  
20 services licensure, but more important than  
21 that, I'm asking each of you to champion this  
22 cause. What I'm asking you to do now is to  
23 send a clear message to Pennsylvania that  
24 Pennsylvania's standard of paraprofessional

1 front-line direct practice workforce is  
2 simply unacceptable. Before we license  
3 massage therapists or landscapers, let's  
4 ensure those folks who are working in the  
5 trenches providing front-line social services  
6 have the opportunity to be licensed. While I  
7 would like to mandate this license, I  
8 recognize that unfortunately a large number  
9 of Pennsylvania's front-line human services  
10 work force could not meet the very basic  
11 requirements that we've outlined to obtain  
12 this license. To that end, it is the goal of  
13 NASW to create the license, and allow  
14 employers the ability to select qualified and  
15 licensed professionals to provide their  
16 services.

17 And NASW Pennsylvania would like to  
18 acknowledge Representative Mundy for her  
19 support in introducing this important piece  
20 of legislation. Over the past several  
21 months, we have spoken with numerous  
22 individuals to gain insight and opinion about  
23 how to strengthen this bill. Social workers  
24 feel that we should advocate for -- some

1 social workers feel we should advocate for an  
2 exclusively for bachelor-level social  
3 workers. While others feel that the BSW  
4 should be on equal footing with other  
5 degrees.

6 Having spoken to the members of the  
7 state Pennsylvania Board of Social Workers,  
8 and Marriage and Family Therapists and  
9 Professional Counselors, as well as BSW  
10 Program Directors and Social Work Deans  
11 across the state, NASW has prepared the  
12 attached amendment which addresses some of  
13 the concerns that were brought to our  
14 attention. The most significant concerns  
15 with the current bill was changing the name  
16 of the license from Licensed Social Service  
17 Worker to Licensed Human Service  
18 Professional. Thanks to the hard work of  
19 Representative Gergely and Chairman Sturla,  
20 social workers now have title protection,  
21 which you can't call yourself a social worker  
22 without a Social Work degree, and LLSW would  
23 require a person to use the SW, even if they  
24 weren't a social worker. That's part of that

1 protective title protection. Therefore, a  
2 change in the name to Licensed Human Service  
3 Professional is necessary and appropriate.

4 The second change that came as a  
5 result of the statewide conversations was to  
6 alter the scope of practice for licensed  
7 human professionals. In no way does NASW of  
8 Pennsylvania want to promote using of  
9 bachelor-level licensed individuals to  
10 perform the work that should be by master  
11 level individuals. The purpose of the  
12 bachelor-level license is to professionalize  
13 the direct practice functions such as  
14 investigating child and elder abuse, care and  
15 custody of abused children, and  
16 implementation of therapeutic treatment plans  
17 for autistic children, mental health,  
18 psychotherapy, and other treatment services  
19 should be provided by master level  
20 individuals. In rewording the scope of  
21 practice NASW Pennsylvania has made it much  
22 clearer what functions would be appropriate  
23 for a licensed human service professional to  
24 perform.

1           NASW Pennsylvania realizes creating a  
2 new license is a complicated process.  
3 Hopefully, I have provided you with a strong  
4 justification why this license is necessary  
5 as well as some details about our ongoing  
6 efforts to create the most appropriate front-  
7 line license possible.

8           However, I'm not a bachelor-level  
9 social worker, I'm a master's level social  
10 worker. So I have asked Patti Ward, BSW on  
11 my staff, to explain why as a non-traditional  
12 college and now graduate student, she  
13 supports a professional license for bachelor-  
14 level individuals.

15           The proposed amendment also is  
16 attached there, so you can see it, and, you  
17 know, I wanted to make sure we were clear on  
18 the language we were proposing.

19           Here is Patti.

20           MS. WARD: Good morning, members of  
21 the House Professional Licensure Committee  
22 and staff. My name is Patti Ward and I was  
23 born June 24, 1964 in York County,  
24 Pennsylvania. I lived on a farm in

1 Middlesburg with my family and I remember  
2 being a happy child. At age 5, I was removed  
3 from the farm and placed in a home in  
4 Harrisburg with a woman that everyone  
5 referred to as my biological mother. No one  
6 really ever explained that to me. My parents  
7 would visit me often until my biological  
8 mother said that they were interfering with  
9 my transition and ordered them to stay away.  
10 Many things occurred behind those closed  
11 doors. Finally, at age 15, I was removed  
12 from the home after I revealed 'daddy's  
13 little secret'. I was placed in a group home  
14 in Mechanicsburg.

15           Throughout my forty-three years, I  
16 have traveled my share of wrong roads and  
17 encountered many obstacles along the way. I  
18 was not given the stable foundation that  
19 children so desperately need to enter  
20 adulthood well-grounded. In order to survive  
21 and raise my own child, I have received  
22 welfare, housing assistance, unemployment,  
23 food stamps and child care assistance and I  
24 have been treated by people who had no clue

1       how to speak or interact with someone in  
2       crisis. They made me feel low and  
3       unimportant -- and like everything was my  
4       fault because I was such a bad person. At  
5       times, I would not even seek the services  
6       that my family needed for fear of being  
7       judged.

8               Hungry to learn, I started college in  
9       1995, and began working as a case manager for  
10      homeless women. I spoke to them in "street"  
11      as I was raised. When I started classes for  
12      my Bachelor's degree in Social Work, I  
13      learned that my own judgmental attitude -- I  
14      learned about my own judgmental attitude and  
15      how I portrayed that to my clients, and even  
16      worse, how worse it made them feel, just the  
17      way I had been made to feel. Through my  
18      education I learned how to speak people in  
19      crisis and validate their feelings, whether I  
20      agreed with them or not. My social work  
21      education has taught me how to identify  
22      someone in crisis and addressing it or bring  
23      it to the attention of someone that can  
24      help. I learned how I should have been

1 treated by service providers through my  
2 social work classes and how I want to be sure  
3 I treated others.

4 Today I focus on not what I've been  
5 through, the frequent change and traumatic  
6 experiences, but from what I've learned from  
7 those experiences. I have learned to  
8 research and prepare, observe, grow and  
9 persevere. My life has made me stronger. I  
10 use my voice to stand up for what is right,  
11 to advocate for change as well as to  
12 encourage others to do the same. I strive to  
13 understand, to make things better, and to  
14 empower others to stand up for themselves. I  
15 no longer hide out of fear, but I rise to the  
16 challenge. I'm very proud of my  
17 accomplishments. As a single mother raising  
18 a young child was a challenge. I have  
19 completed my BSW and am currently enrolled in  
20 a Master of Social Work Program at Widener  
21 University. I have had to work to support  
22 myself from the time I was 18 years old.  
23 From my perspective, having a Bachelor  
24 license would help people in two very

1       tangible ways: First, it would raise the  
2       quality of front-line services to ensure that  
3       vulnerable clients are empowered and  
4       assisted, rather than judged and belittled.  
5       If we want social service to make a real  
6       difference, they must be delivered by  
7       professionals.

8               I have struggled to support my family  
9       in spite of my BSW degree. Creating a  
10       bachelor-level license would make it clear  
11       that direct service front-line work can, in  
12       fact, be a profession for someone and should  
13       be recognized as a profession, if we want  
14       committed individuals fulfilling those  
15       roles.

16               Thank you for taking the time to  
17       listen to my story. I understand the  
18       competing interest that you must evaluate  
19       when making decisions. I hope that my story  
20       will stay with you as you debate why it is  
21       critical that we professionalize the  
22       workforce of our social service systems.

23               CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

24       Questions from members?

1 Representative Saylor.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: For either one  
3 of you that wants to answer this question,  
4 there's talk in this bill of an exam to be  
5 given.

6 What kinds of questions would be on  
7 that exam for people to take and have to  
8 pass?

9 MS. MEHNERT: Well, for the social  
10 worker profession, there is the Association  
11 of Social Work Boards that are in existence.  
12 The PLA for social work, it is a master's  
13 level exam and that talks about sort of  
14 appropriate theories of working with people,  
15 how do you appropriately, you know, apply  
16 mental health theories to social services  
17 areas, how do you understand family and group  
18 dynamics. So there is also by the same  
19 organization a Bachelor of Social Work exam.  
20 In fact, several states already have an  
21 exclusively BSW license, and that requires  
22 that that license -- that exam be taken. So  
23 it really looks at, you know, family  
24 dynamics, group dynamics and individuals.

1           Because one of the things, I was a  
2           child welfare worker, and I have my  
3           University of Pittsburgh exam, but one of the  
4           things I saw in my coworkers who had  
5           Accounting degrees and English struggling  
6           with was when someone is cussing you out and  
7           spitting in your face, and you're removing  
8           their children, that's understandably pretty  
9           upsetting, how do you not take that  
10          personally? How do you understand the  
11          dynamics of individuals or under the  
12          processes that that they have to go through,  
13          to not make it personal so that you stay in a  
14          professional role and don't respond as an  
15          individual. So it's sort of testing one's  
16          ability to understand kind of theories around  
17          interacting with individuals and groups and  
18          the delivery of social service systems.

19                 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: How many  
20                 states of the 50 states have licensing in  
21                 social work?

22                 MS. MEHNERT: Just about every state  
23                 has some level of licensure, for which we  
24                 have already, too. This is not a license for

1 social work. But this is a license for --  
2 there are only a few -- there are several  
3 states, and I can get the exact number, but  
4 Ohio has a bachelor-level of social work  
5 license. New York has a bachelor-level of  
6 Social Work license. Utah has a license  
7 that's similar to this, licensed social  
8 service worker, which is more exclusive than  
9 just a Bachelor in Social Work.

10 One of the debates is do we make a  
11 license for a Bachelor for social workers or  
12 are we a little more inclusive? But if we  
13 need to try to change the standard of what  
14 services are on the front-line. And rather  
15 than being turf territorial and say, "Oh, you  
16 want it for social workers," we would rather  
17 affect the quality of services that are  
18 received across the entire state.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: And the  
20 biggest concern I have, and I see this as a  
21 state representative, because most of the  
22 state representatives get called all the time  
23 when somebody loses their children or  
24 grandparents complain about custody awards,

1 domestic relations -- from husbands, to  
2 mothers, to grandparents, whoever, aunts,  
3 uncles -- about why a court made a wrong  
4 decision or the social worker made the wrong  
5 decision, whatever it is. And I guess my  
6 concern has been, I agree with you, it does  
7 take professionals. And I don't necessarily  
8 have a problem with it.

9 The biggest concern I have sometimes  
10 is the philosophy that may be tested,  
11 because, you know, I'm being assertive here,  
12 some people may look at this well, it's a  
13 liberal type test, and you've got to go this  
14 way to answer that.

15 DR. MEHNERT: Oh, it's not a values  
16 test.

17 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: I do believe  
18 those are the concerns that we have, a test  
19 that is very fair to all. I mean, there's a  
20 lot of philosophies going, how you raise  
21 children, so that, you know, some people  
22 believe in spanking, some don't believe in  
23 it, and others what it may be. And I think  
24 that is a real question. Certain people may

1 have an objection to this, it's okay. Are we  
2 using political philosophies in licensing? I  
3 just wanted to mention that.

4 DR. MEHNERT: Right. And I would  
5 concur with you that I worked for Secretary  
6 Richmond as a children's policy person, and  
7 she would be really frustrated with cases in  
8 counties, and she would be like, "Jenna, look  
9 at this case. There's got to be something we  
10 could do."

11 And I would read through and they  
12 hadn't violated state law. They hadn't  
13 violated state regulations. But they  
14 achieved it completely unethically. But  
15 because there is no license, there was no  
16 where to take that.

17 And if they were licensed, then there  
18 would be a board to say, "Look at this  
19 unethical behavior and look at this."

20 And so I agree though that we have to  
21 to have a test that looks at knowledge base,  
22 not preference or, you know, political  
23 ideology.

24 The ASAB standard is utilized in every

1 single state, all the conservative states,  
2 except California, they don't think it's good  
3 enough, so they have an oral exam. But  
4 everybody else uses the ASAB exams.

5 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Representative  
6 Gillespie.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you,  
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 Jenna, you talked about in your  
10 testimony there's an estimated 40,000 degreed  
11 social workers in the Commonwealth.

12 Do you have any idea how many people  
13 are out there withouts certification or  
14 degrees?

15 DR. MEHNERT: Well, unfortunately,  
16 only about a third of the nation, including  
17 Pennsylvania child welfare workforce are  
18 actually social workers. So that's why when  
19 we drafted this we included sociology,  
20 psychology and human development, so they  
21 could also get this license. Even though  
22 Pennsylvania, it's a little upsetting, we  
23 have 40 accredited social work programs, 11  
24 at master's level -- 29 at the undergraduate

1 level and master level. We're educating  
2 other state social workers because we need  
3 only 12 credits in human services to be a  
4 child welfare worker in this state. And the  
5 salary of a child welfare worker is at  
6 \$19,000 a year. So you've gone to school and  
7 you have got a master's degree in Social  
8 Work, you're either not going to work in  
9 child welfare, or you're going to leave the  
10 state.

11 Other states, California requires a  
12 master's in Social Work. New Mexico requires  
13 a BA in Social Work. So when states are  
14 recognizing the value, and Pennsylvania is  
15 not, even though we're one of the states, we  
16 have the second or third largest number of  
17 schools in social workers, University of  
18 Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh,  
19 Temple, West Chester, lots of state schools,  
20 Slippery Rock, they all have Social Work  
21 programs, end up leaving Pennsylvania because  
22 our system is not valued. If you can have 12  
23 human service credits, and I got a master's  
24 degree, and I'm not making any more than

1 someone with a history degree, what is your  
2 incentive?

3 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you.

4 You also referenced failure, you  
5 highlighted Philadelphia as a risk. Could  
6 you share a little bit about that story?

7 DR. MEHNERT: Well, the case in  
8 Philadelphia, actually, my mother called me  
9 at 7:00 this morning rather upset, now,  
10 they're killing social workers in  
11 Philadelphia. You got to do something.

12 The fact that there was an indictment  
13 and an arrest I believe of seven individuals  
14 involving a 14-year-old disabled child who  
15 was an open DHS case was receiving services  
16 from a community-based provider. And those  
17 records were falsified, the amount of contact  
18 they were having with the child, the child  
19 was not in school, it's a disability, of  
20 course, the individuals, with the Disability  
21 Act, means they could still be in school, and  
22 a child died. Now the parents are also being  
23 charged, so are the caseworkers involved.  
24 Unfortunately, those caseworkers are all

1 being called social workers when, in fact,  
2 they are not social workers, which is why.

3 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: How has  
4 that trial gone?

5 DR. MEHNERT: Which is one of those  
6 cases that could clearly be avoided.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you,  
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

10 You talked about how many have  
11 appropriate education, or at least education  
12 that would be considered in line with what a  
13 profession is.

14 Do you have any statistics about  
15 length of stay in the profession? I know  
16 that's profession is plagued with, because of  
17 the low pay, I got a job as a human services  
18 worker, and then I go to work at a shoe store  
19 because I could make another buck an hour,  
20 you know.

21 DR. MEHNERT: I could send over a  
22 whole bunch of different research we prepared  
23 before because we provided it to the Civil  
24 Service Commission. This is, once again,

1 this is about social workers. Some of the  
2 social workers will stay in child welfare on  
3 average about ten years; someone without a  
4 Social Work degree about two.

5 And when you talk about learning scale  
6 and retention, the importance of longevity, I  
7 could speak as a child welfare worker, when I  
8 look back now before I had children, because,  
9 I remember yelling at or reprimanding my  
10 cases for doing things like letting your baby  
11 sit in the car seat when they have a cold.  
12 Well, who doesn't do that? Of course, I  
13 didn't have the education. And I was told  
14 that was a bad thing. So really the life  
15 perspective is important when you're a child  
16 welfare worker, and the philosophy you take  
17 right out of school, for a child welfare  
18 worker, they last a year or two.

19 The federal general accounting office  
20 did a quick study on how quickly the child  
21 welfare quickly leave the workforce. It's  
22 really tough work. And if you haven't gone  
23 to school and been prepared, like when you  
24 get your Bachelor's and have 500 hours in the

1 field, your master's in Social Work, 900  
2 hours in the field working with clients  
3 telling them, this is what this child was  
4 going to mean.

5 When you graduate with your history  
6 degree and can't get a job, and get this job,  
7 and all of a sudden, "Oh, my, goodness I got  
8 to go where? People are screaming at me, I'm  
9 supposed to be nice to," people don't last,  
10 because it's tough stuff.

11 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other  
12 members?

13 Representative Adolph.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 First of all, Patti, you should be  
17 very proud of your accomplishments. It's a  
18 good story and congratulations for your hard  
19 work.

20 Jenna, Chairman Sturla mentioned in  
21 the beginning of the meeting that we received  
22 comments from the commissioner.

23 DR. MEHNERT: Yeah.

24 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: You know, it's

1 the department of state's policy that a  
2 summarized evaluation report be submitted --

3 DR. MEHNERT: Yeah.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: -- to the  
5 board for their evaluation and so forth to  
6 see whether they, you know, think this is a  
7 good idea or whatever.

8 Would your organization be the one  
9 that's going to do this summarized evaluation  
10 report?

11 DR. MEHNERT: Absolutely. We first  
12 had the legislation introduced to get a  
13 chance to see what the other people thought.  
14 Like we developed the amendment here. We  
15 wanted to flush it out for a while. And  
16 we'll absolutely do a report to the  
17 department of state. But we wanted to do  
18 once we had a good sense of what we wanted  
19 the license to look like and to move forward  
20 with.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: And my  
22 executive director here pointed out to me,  
23 you used the word mandate. "Why I would like  
24 to mandate this license."

1           Could you explain yourself what you  
2           mean by mandate?

3           DR. MEHNERT:   Sure.  I did an  
4           undertaking with Jamie Buckenour, who used to  
5           work for the Children & Youth and was the  
6           past Executive Director of that committee.  
7           She is now my government relations person.  
8           So she brings me down to reality often.

9           Well, I personally don't think you  
10          should be a child welfare worker or adult  
11          protective caseworker or many of our front-  
12          line positions that are so critical, if  
13          you've ever encountered child welfare.  The  
14          thought that people are coming to your house  
15          and could take your kids away like that.

16          And often, I've talked to workers,  
17          "She doesn't take care of them.  I'm not  
18          going to leave those kids there."  But I am  
19          making ethical or appropriate decisions, some  
20          of them.  So my -- in the Jenna Mehnert  
21          world, they would all have to be licensed.  
22          Because licensing requires ethical  
23          oversight.  It requires continuing  
24          education.  And it requires meeting the

1 baseline standard.

2           However, as far as Pennsylvania and  
3 the state and local control that, counties  
4 make decisions about hiring for child  
5 welfare, I will be very, very, very old  
6 before this would ever pass, if I were to  
7 continue to fight with it being mandated. So  
8 that's my personal opinion. I would be happy  
9 to just have the license exist as an option.

10           And you hear from an employer, perhaps  
11 later, who said, "Well, listen if a license  
12 existed, that would be great for us because  
13 we could then look at a way to prioritize who  
14 we hire and choosing to hire one who is  
15 licensed, who is willing to follow ethical  
16 oversight." So, you know, there's Jenna  
17 Mehnert's world and then there's the rest of  
18 reality.

19           REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: The last  
20 question.

21           DR. MEHNERT: Yes.

22           REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: The social  
23 workers, you know, are normally employed by  
24 government agencies. Okay?

1           Are there any self-employed social  
2 workers out there?

3           DR. MEHNERT: There are actually a  
4 large number of social workers. In social  
5 work, when you get your master's in social  
6 work, the second LSW, right when you  
7 graduate. If you get 3600 hours of clinical  
8 social work experience, you could become a  
9 licensed clinical social worker, which is an  
10 independent mental health provider. So there  
11 are a ratio of licensed clinical social  
12 workers, who are in private practice,  
13 providing mental health purposes.

14           There are also a fair number of social  
15 workers who do business around private child  
16 custody, evaluations for divorce. They  
17 testify. I know several who testify in cases  
18 involving families or divorce, even a whole  
19 school of forensic social work, who is very  
20 involved in the internal justice system.

21           REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you.

22           CHAIRMAN STURLA: Any other  
23 questions? Thank you.

24           DR. MEHNERT: Thank you very much.

1           CHAIRMAN STURLA: I will also point  
2 out that we have been joined by  
3 Representative Wansacz.

4           And our next testifier for our panel  
5 is a faculty and students from the University  
6 of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, Gayle  
7 Mallinger, B. A. Program director, Gina Burke  
8 and Adam Farber.

9           MS. MALLINGER: Hi.

10          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Hi. You all still  
11 want to do that after you heard that  
12 testimony?

13          MS. MALLINGER: Good morning, Chairman  
14 Sturla and Adolph, and members of the  
15 committee and staff.

16          My name is Gayle Mallinger. I'm the  
17 director of the Baccalaureate Social Work  
18 Program at the University of Pittsburgh. The  
19 BASW program was initially accredited by  
20 Council of Social Work Education in 1973, and  
21 has been continuously re-affirmed since that  
22 time.

23          Our program, as well as other  
24 undergraduate social work programs throughout

1 the state prepare its graduates to engage in  
2 entry-level generalist social work practice  
3 with individual families, groups, communities  
4 and/or organizations within this multi-  
5 cultural society.

6 Professional practice settings for  
7 entry-level generalists, bachelor-level  
8 social workers, include child welfare, family  
9 preservation work, mental retardation and  
10 mental health, drug and alcohol, juvenile  
11 justice, agencies serving the elderly,  
12 shelters for battered women, homeless  
13 shelters, community food banks, neighborhood  
14 citizen organizations, hospitals and  
15 rehabilitation centers among many others.

16 Undergraduate social work programs  
17 uniquely prepare students for practice in  
18 human service agencies by preparing them to  
19 think critically, demonstrating understanding  
20 of professional ethics and values, policy  
21 advocacy and the ability to demonstrate and  
22 understanding a very theoretical perspectives  
23 as they explain individual behavior across  
24 the life span and behavior within the context

1 of families, groups, organizations and  
2 communities.

3 Upon graduation, our students are very  
4 well prepared to utilize the skills they have  
5 learned throughout the program and found to  
6 be effective practitioners.

7 I'm very privileged this morning to  
8 introduce you to Ms. Gina Burke and Mr. Adam  
9 Farber, who in a few short weeks will begin  
10 their senior year in our bachelor's program.  
11 Both students serve on the executive Board of  
12 the BASW Club.

13 MS. BURKE: Chairman Sturla and  
14 Chairman Adolph, members of the committee and  
15 staff.

16 My name is Gina Burke. I am currently  
17 enrolled in the School of Social Work here at  
18 the University of Pittsburgh. And I will  
19 obtain my Bachelor's degree in Social Work in  
20 April of 2009.

21 While in the School of Social Work, we  
22 have been taught a great deal about ethics  
23 and values. Through my first year in the  
24 BASW program, we have learned different

1 methods of intervention and applied them to  
2 all types of social work practice, including  
3 work with individuals, families, communities  
4 and groups. We have also been educated not  
5 only on the history of social work, but the  
6 history of social policy as well as varying  
7 perspectives on current policies and how  
8 these policies impact the people with whom we  
9 work. During every class in the social work  
10 program, we've incorporated all of the six  
11 values, which are listed in the NASW Code of  
12 Ethics. These include service, social  
13 justice, dignity, and the worth of a person,  
14 importance of human relationships and  
15 integrity and competence. Not only have we  
16 learned the Code of Ethics inside and out,  
17 but we have learned the importance of  
18 applying these values in our work.

19 The NASW Code of Ethics distinguishes  
20 the field of social work. We learned to take  
21 this code very seriously and how to apply it  
22 in not only our work with vulnerable  
23 populations, but with our future colleagues  
24 as well. We have learned the steps to take

1 when we encounter ethical dilemmas and how we  
2 can be supportive to colleagues who may be  
3 struggling with such different dilemmas. We  
4 have learned that while not all social  
5 workers may hold similar personal values, we  
6 act in accordance with our professional  
7 values.

8 Social work students have also been  
9 tested on ethical decision-making. We had to  
10 describe situations and give specific  
11 examples of a worker's personal and  
12 professional beliefs being opposed and how to  
13 use the process we learned about in class to  
14 solve the dilemma. We learned about various  
15 theoretical perspectives and how to apply  
16 these when working with different  
17 populations.

18 For example, we learned how to apply  
19 crisis theory when working with a person who  
20 has been sexually assaulted or the victim of  
21 another type of crime.

22 We had an assignment that included  
23 gathering information about a famous person,  
24 making an assessment, and applying the

1 different theories and models that we learned  
2 in class to intervene with this person.

3 I know it would be more difficult when  
4 the person is a client, however, I know that  
5 I am very well prepared to provide services  
6 to those in need.

7 In another social work class, we  
8 learned even more about the human dignity and  
9 worth of a person as well as diversity. We  
10 were able to analyze ourselves by writing a  
11 self-assessment paper. The self-assessment  
12 paper was an assignment where we were able to  
13 reflect and think back on our lives and  
14 realize when we were first introduced to and  
15 learned about people of different religions,  
16 racial and ethnic gender differences and  
17 different sexual orientations. Through this  
18 assignment we had to think about these  
19 moments and how at that time we felt. We  
20 also had to discuss what we learned from the  
21 assignment.

22 In the same class, one of my favorite  
23 assignments was when we had to interview  
24 someone we knew little or nothing about. The

1 person we interviewed had to be a different  
2 race, gender, religion, sexual orientation,  
3 or at least ten years older or younger than  
4 ourselves. One of the things I enjoyed about  
5 the assignment, which is very important to  
6 the social work profession is that we had to  
7 pick out the strengths of this person. This  
8 helps us in the future learn about our  
9 client's strengths through interview.

10 Not only have we learned about direct  
11 practice, we have had a community class as  
12 well. We were taught that social work is not  
13 limited to counseling, but there is an  
14 opportunity to do community work -- to do  
15 community social work. We had to pick a  
16 community and write about the history of that  
17 community, had to attend council meetings,  
18 community meetings, do interviews and obtain  
19 census data. We also learned the different  
20 interventions that are available when working  
21 within a community. We learned that if we  
22 are going to work with communities, you must  
23 know the history of that area, and also make  
24 yourself known to the residents of that

1 neighborhood.

2           Throughout the past year, I've learned  
3 the importance of the need for social workers  
4 to learn through service. During our junior  
5 year of the program, we have volunteered  
6 within our community. The students must  
7 complete over 90 hours of social service  
8 work. Half of these hours were performed  
9 while we're enrolled in Introduction to  
10 Social Work class. I volunteered in an after  
11 school program ran by Community Human  
12 services Corporation. Many of the children  
13 there were from impoverished families and  
14 were not even English speakers. Part of what  
15 I did was help the children with their  
16 homework and help them increase their social  
17 skills. The remaining hours were geared  
18 toward social policy. I completed the  
19 additional 45 hours of service learning with  
20 the United Steelworkers Union. There I  
21 learned about the history of the union  
22 movement in Pittsburgh, and how this union  
23 particularly, based on that history,  
24 supported certain pending policies and how

1 important policy advocacy was to this  
2 organization. All of the different  
3 activities that we worked so hard on inside  
4 this classroom, in addition to the service  
5 learning in the field practicum that Adam  
6 will be discussing has prepared us for our  
7 future careers in social work.

8 While participating in these  
9 activities, we truly learned the importance  
10 of service and empowerment, a large component  
11 of the generalist practice. In our social  
12 policy class, where we learned about social  
13 and economic justice, we were taught about  
14 the importance of knowing programs such as,  
15 certainly but not limited to TANF, Medicare,  
16 Medicaid, and the Food Stamp program. Our  
17 professor made it known that if you're going  
18 to become a social worker, you must be  
19 prepared to advocate. Also, with this class  
20 we were taken to the Capitol building in  
21 Harrisburg, and met with our local  
22 legislatures and were prepared about how to  
23 lobby on issues pertinent to social and  
24 economic justice. It is these values, along

1 with the knowledge we gained and skills that  
2 we learned that make us professionals.

3 I know that when I graduate, I will  
4 have a proper knowledge, skills, and training  
5 to become a competent social worker. These  
6 skills will only improve when I continue my  
7 education in social work. The School of  
8 Social Work teaches not only the obligations  
9 we will have to our clients, but also the  
10 obligations we have to this profession.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. FARBER: Good morning, Chairman  
13 Sturla, Chairman Adolph and committee members  
14 and staff. My name is Adam Farber and this  
15 upcoming semester will be the start of my  
16 senior year here at the University of  
17 Pittsburgh.

18 As is Ms. Burke, I'm enrolled in the  
19 School of Social Work. I very much look  
20 forward to this upcoming year, not only will  
21 I be enhancing my education by continuing to  
22 take classes directed to the practice of  
23 social work, I will be beginning my Field  
24 Placement. Field Placement is strictly

1 supervised, educational internship which  
2 allows us as students to fully integrate what  
3 we have learned into practical situations.  
4 The program strongly stresses the Field  
5 Placement as it is a capstone experience. We  
6 are strictly supervised while in placement  
7 and each of us must complete at least 600  
8 hours of Field Placement within our senior  
9 year in order to graduate with a Bachelor's  
10 degree in Social Work. Concurrent with our  
11 field placement, we are enrolled in a weekly  
12 practicum seminar lab.

13 At this practicum seminar, seniors are  
14 able to further integrate their experiences  
15 within their Field Placement with what is  
16 taught within the classroom. The professors  
17 and other students help to integrate social  
18 work values and ethics into each student's  
19 placement experience. Even though each  
20 student is given a specific field experience,  
21 the seminar gives us the opportunity to hear  
22 about and learn from the experiences of other  
23 students and we will benefit from the  
24 professor's feedback. Thus, this experience

1 enriches our learning because all students  
2 are exposed to various experiences within  
3 each area of the social worker.

4           As Mr. Burke has said, the first year  
5 within the program teaches us the general  
6 perspectives in social work. As we have  
7 learned extensively in class, the  
8 generalist's perspective is an approach to  
9 helping others, that reflect social workers  
10 commitment to comprehensive assessment and  
11 planning. This unique approach recognizes  
12 the influences the social environment has on  
13 the client's quality of life.

14           As social workers, we use our  
15 assessment of our clients to supports -- of  
16 the client's support within the environment  
17 to determine our client's capacity to manage  
18 issues that arise.

19           The strict supervision in Field  
20 Placement allows to properly apply the data  
21 collection process, assessment of situations,  
22 and determine the intervention that is most  
23 appropriate for our clients. We also are  
24 able to apply skills learned in the classroom

1 to assess the effectiveness of the  
2 intervention.

3 As students, we worked very hard to  
4 obtain a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.  
5 As BASW students, we learned to focus on the  
6 person in their environment, abide by the  
7 NASW Code of Ethics as well as to empower  
8 clients within the systems we are working. A  
9 curriculum providing information that is  
10 specific to the social work practice allows  
11 us to master the skills needed to be an  
12 effective social worker.

13 In closing, as highlighted by  
14 Ms. Mallinger and Ms. Burke, I hope that I  
15 have furthered your understanding of the  
16 rigorous training process that we as  
17 bachelor's level social workers go through.  
18 Therefore, I ask you to support a bachelor-  
19 level human service licensure, so that our  
20 most vulnerable citizens benefit from the  
21 expertise of well-educated, trained  
22 professionals.

23 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

24 Representative Saylor.

1           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR:  Where are you  
2    from, Ms. Burke?  Where are you from?

3           MS. BURKE:  I'm from Pittsburgh.

4           MR. FARBER:  I'm from New York.

5           Is it your hope to return to your home  
6    state of New York or Pennsylvania?

7           MR. FARBER:  I haven't quite decided  
8    yet.  I mean, as I go through my senior year  
9    and then I'm going to be continuing my  
10   education and get my MSW, I don't know where  
11   yet, but I'm starting to do that research.

12          REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR:  Thank you for  
13   your testimony today.

14          Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15          CHAIRMAN STURLA:  Questions.

16          REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH:  Thank you, Mr.  
17   Chairman.

18          Ms. Mallinger, you have graduates.  
19   What type of jobs are awaiting for your  
20   graduates?  What type of percentage have a  
21   job waiting when they graduate?

22          MS. MALLINGER:  I'm glad to report I  
23   just finished Friday a data report for  
24   someone within the university.  We graduated

1       only 23 students last April, end of April.  
2       Of those 23 students, 22 are employed full  
3       time or are attending a master's program, or  
4       a master's program at the University of  
5       Pittsburgh in the fall. And the one woman  
6       who is not employed full time is only  
7       unemployed because of a disabling illness.  
8       So that everyone that wanted a position at  
9       the bachelor's level is employed; 100 percent  
10      of our students, found employment at the end  
11      of April. So it's --

12                REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: That's a good  
13      percentage.

14                Are you familiar with the type of  
15      salaries that your graduates are earning upon  
16      graduation?

17                MS. MALLINGER: That, I'm not as  
18      familiar with. It really depends upon  
19      whether or not they're in a public agency,  
20      private or nonprofit. And the experience  
21      they had prior to completing their education  
22      with a number of non-traditional students, if  
23      they completed their degree part time while  
24      they're still working. So that accounts for

1 some difference in salary.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Now, are you  
3 taking a position on licensing?

4 MS. MALLINGER: Yes, sir, I am. I'm  
5 absolutely 100 percent in favor of the  
6 proposed bill.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you.

8 MS. MALLINGER: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Any questions from  
10 other members? Thank you very much. And  
11 good luck with your careers.

12 Next we have Dr. Pamela Richmond,  
13 assistant professor of social work at  
14 Mansfield University.

15 DR. RICHMOND: Members of the House  
16 Professional Licensure Committee, staff, and  
17 those in attendance for this informative  
18 hearing.

19 Good morning. I'm Dr. Pamela  
20 Richmond, and I teach full time in the social  
21 work program at Mansfield University.  
22 Mansfield is located in the north central  
23 region of the state in a rural community.  
24 I'm grateful to have the opportunity to speak

1 with you this morning regarding the benefits  
2 of the social service license on rural human  
3 services.

4 However, prior to talking about the  
5 present and my students, I would like to  
6 briefly refer to my background in social  
7 services to demonstrate why the license is  
8 important.

9 Twenty years ago I began working at a  
10 residential treatment facility for adolescent  
11 girls with drug and alcohol difficulties, as  
12 well as emotional and behavioral problems.  
13 When I was hired, I had an associate's degree  
14 with no previous working experience with  
15 teens. In fact, I had worked several years  
16 with younger children. What I brought to the  
17 position was an eagerness to learn from the  
18 new experience, kindness, and the desire to  
19 help others. Unfortunately, I lacked the  
20 education, the knowledge, the skills and  
21 experience for the job. I was told I was  
22 hired because they liked my energy and they  
23 thought that they could mold me. Without a  
24 doubt, I was naive. All of my knowledge and

1 skills was learned working on the job. And  
2 it took several years to master. I also  
3 discovered later on, that I was hired because  
4 administration was desperate. Licensing was  
5 coming into the agency and they needed to  
6 have all their front-line positions filled.

7 It was years after I began working in  
8 the residential treatment program that I  
9 decided to return to school to finish my  
10 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in  
11 Social Work.

12 It is from my knowledge of living and  
13 working in several states and having the  
14 opportunity to supervise social service  
15 workers that I can attest that not a lot has  
16 changed in the 20 years since I was an  
17 inexperienced helping professional.  
18 Typically, there is a lot of turnover of  
19 front-line workers. Agencies are looking to  
20 have a position filled yesterday, and may not  
21 hire the most qualified person for the job.  
22 Rather, an individual that presents as caring  
23 and available typically wins the invitation  
24 of a job offer. Experience tells me that

1       this is not what is always in the best  
2       interest of the client.

3               I would like to share with you how  
4       licensure will benefit undergraduate social  
5       work students living in the rural areas of  
6       Pennsylvania. The majority of the students  
7       in social work at Mansfield University are  
8       first generation college students, having  
9       always lived in the area. For the vast  
10      majority, they're not interested in  
11      continuing their education beyond their  
12      Bachelor's degree. And they have no plan to  
13      move from the area.

14              There is no accredited state operated  
15      MSW program in my rural part of the state.  
16      Quite simply, the purpose of the students  
17      obtaining the Bachelor's degree in Social  
18      Work is to better position themselves to  
19      compete for a human service job with  
20      individuals that do not have a degree in the  
21      human service related field, nor the in-depth  
22      course work and practical experience they are  
23      provided in their undergraduate education.  
24      And this is where it can't be stated enough.

1 Students graduating from any social work  
2 program that has been an accredited by the  
3 Council on Social Work Education incorporates  
4 all 50 states. They have to have course work  
5 addressing families, groups, organizations,  
6 community diversity, human behavior, and  
7 ethics. In addition, all students prior to  
8 graduation must complete 500 hours of  
9 fieldwork where the student is placed in an  
10 agency working under supervision of a social  
11 worker where they can apply their knowledge  
12 and skills that they've learned in the  
13 classroom prior to graduation.

14 The rigor of the course work and  
15 fieldwork is to ensure that students have the  
16 necessary training when they enter the  
17 workforce so clients are assisted in the best  
18 way possible.

19 My colleague, Jenna Mehnert, has aptly  
20 expressed that licensure raises the bar due  
21 to the required education needed and checks  
22 and balances of demonstrating knowledge by  
23 passing a rigorous exam prior to working with  
24 our most vulnerable members of society, which

1 include children and teens, the elderly, and  
2 mentally ill.

3 Additionally, licensure will also  
4 serve to protect the public from those who  
5 have no professional training.

6 In rural areas where services are  
7 limited, individuals deserve the right to  
8 know that their assistance is coming from the  
9 most qualified professional.

10 On behalf of the social work students  
11 at Mansfield University, they would welcome  
12 the opportunity to take a licensure exam upon  
13 graduation to demonstrate that they are well-  
14 equipped to enter the workforce. Unlike  
15 their professor, they will start off working  
16 in the social service arena from a position  
17 of strength. They do not have to learn the  
18 basic skills on the job.

19 Therefore, I respectfully request your  
20 support for bachelor-level human service  
21 license because it will better serve all  
22 residents of the State of Pennsylvania,  
23 including rural residents.

24 Thank you again for the opportunity to

1 speak with you this morning.

2 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

3 Questions from members?

4 Representative Wansacz.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Thank you,  
6 Chairman Sturla.

7 Dr. Richmond, how many students are  
8 you expecting to graduate from Mansfield in  
9 social work?

10 DR. RICHMOND: We have currently 1,000  
11 students and 120 students in the program. I  
12 would say probably 25.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Are you  
14 seeing in the rural parts of the state, are  
15 you seeing the same problems we're seeing  
16 with a high turnover, a demand as you stated  
17 with your previous experience they are hiring  
18 anybody out on the street to fulfill? Are  
19 you seeing that happen or not?

20 DR. RICHMOND: With our students that  
21 are graduating or just --

22 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: In general.

23 DR. RICHMOND: In the general area.

24 Unfortunately, I am fairly new and have only

1       been in the state for a year. And so I don't  
2       have that information.

3               REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Okay. Where  
4       do you come from? North Carolina.

5               DR. RICHMOND: Actually, I was born  
6       and raised in Connecticut. And then I worked  
7       in Wisconsin, where I did my graduate work,  
8       and then in Ohio for my doctoral work.

9               REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Is Ohio, are  
10      they set up differently than Pennsylvania?

11              DR. RICHMOND: Ohio is licensed at the  
12      bachelor-level.

13              REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: You see a big  
14      difference between Ohio and Pennsylvania as  
15      far as that goes? Do they have the same  
16      problems in Ohio?

17              DR. RICHMOND: Oh, absolutely. And,  
18      again, I'm biased because I really do think  
19      that this is important. Having been the  
20      person that was very inexperienced, to the  
21      person supervising individuals with that  
22      working experience, and then teaching  
23      students now to go out, the caliber of  
24      professional, with their knowledge and skills

1 is going to be much different with the  
2 degree.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: One of the  
4 questions I have is, I think any time you do  
5 any licensure with anything, it has to do  
6 with the grandfathering.

7 Is that something -- how would you say  
8 that we approach that? I have a hard time  
9 with saying, for example, we could have many  
10 people in the field 20 years that don't have  
11 the training. Should they have to take a  
12 test, or is it just their experience? How do  
13 we know their experience is actually --  
14 they've done good or bad? How do we go ahead  
15 and approach that as a committee?

16 DR. RICHMOND: I guess what comes to  
17 mind for me, when I did my graduate work in  
18 Wisconsin, and there were some students who  
19 had degrees in psychology or something else.  
20 And when they were coming into the program,  
21 they would come in and could take kinds of  
22 general core courses, or they could come in  
23 with the advanced courses. And some  
24 individuals opted and said exactly what

1       you're saying, "Look, I've had a lot of  
2       experience. I feel like I know this  
3       information in the core courses. And that  
4       it's not going to benefit me." And there was  
5       an exam that they took to kind of  
6       demonstrate, yes, in fact, that core  
7       knowledge that is so needed that, in fact,  
8       they knew it.

9                REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: So you would  
10       be in favor of everybody taking some type of  
11       an exam to make sure that they know what they  
12       are to do?

13               DR. RICHMOND: Yes.

14               REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: My other  
15       question here is, just reading through the  
16       bills and your testimony and kind of at the  
17       same time.

18               Actually, Mr. Chairman, I'll just pass  
19       on that because there's some more  
20       information, hopefully others will testify  
21       and touch on that.

22               Thank you for your testimony.

23               CHAIRMAN STURLA: Representative  
24       Gillespie.

1           REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you,  
2 Mr. Chairman.

3           Dr. Richmond, you talked about your  
4 front-line workers experiencing a tremendous  
5 turnover. Is that due to burnout, economics,  
6 or otherwise?

7           DR. RICHMOND: Certainly, I think it  
8 has to do with the salary. But more than  
9 that, we are working with individuals who are  
10 in crisis. They are in pain. And if you  
11 have not been taught the different  
12 theoretical perspectives, or the different  
13 ways that you might approach a person, your  
14 body language, your eye contact, diversity  
15 issues, which was raised before, if you're  
16 judging someone, you may make a decision that  
17 is more harmful. Those are all things that  
18 are covered in an undergraduate accredited  
19 social work program within course work and  
20 then the 500 hours of fieldwork prior to  
21 graduation. Did I answer your question?

22           REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: If I could  
23 ask you to follow-up a little more. So it's  
24 your feeling by having this program in

1 effect, and learning those skills and having  
2 a broad-based educational background that the  
3 turnover will be reduced?

4 DR. RICHMOND: Yes.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you,  
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

8 I want to follow-up a little bit on  
9 this line of questioning and try to get us in  
10 Jenna's world.

11 DR. RICHMOND: I like her world.

12 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Assuming we can get  
13 licensure for bachelor's, do we start saying  
14 that for anyone working in the human services  
15 field needs to have at least three credits of  
16 social work in the year 2010, and then in the  
17 year 2012, everybody has to have at least six  
18 credits, and in the year 2014, everybody has  
19 to have nine, so that by the year 2015,  
20 before she gets too old, that everybody  
21 that's working in human services either has a  
22 Bachelor's degree or has an equivalent amount  
23 of education in those areas that you say  
24 people need to have the education in order

1 for properly function in that field?

2 DR. RICHMOND: Yes. In Jenna's world,  
3 I think we would start out with more than  
4 three credits to begin with, because just the  
5 intro is kind of laying the foundation as to  
6 why we care about people. And so let's start  
7 out a little higher, since we're in her world  
8 now. But yes, because certainly, I think the  
9 more -- I have a colleague that I work with  
10 who is actually licensed in the State of  
11 Ohio. She was grandfathered in. She has a  
12 degree in -- her doctoral is in sociology and  
13 her master's I believe is in Home Economics  
14 and Family Consumer Studies.

15 What she said is even though she was  
16 grandfathered, she still had to go and take  
17 several courses. And it really changes your  
18 perspective, because, not that we're all  
19 like-minded, but we are starting from the  
20 same place. So when we talk about  
21 recognizing the strengths of clients, well,  
22 to say strengths are important, those are  
23 just words. But to actually talk about it in  
24 a classroom setting.

1           I can't tell you the number of times  
2           I've taught Introduction to Social Work, and  
3           without a doubt, a student will say, "Well,  
4           what happens if a client just doesn't have  
5           any strengths"?

6           And what I say to them is, "Everybody  
7           has strengths. And if you can't find a  
8           strength, it means that you're not looking  
9           hard enough. And perhaps you're carrying  
10          some biased towards this client."

11          So those are opportunities we can  
12          flash these words around. But it's being in  
13          the classroom and it's being in the field  
14          prior to graduation where you can talk about,  
15          "This doesn't work. It says this in the  
16          textbook, but it's not working. Or it  
17          sounded easy when you said that, I shouldn't  
18          be judgmental of other people. But, you know  
19          what, I'm finding that I really have an issue  
20          with this person," based on whatever it may  
21          be. And then we can talk it through in the  
22          classroom.

23                 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

24                 Any other questions? All right.

1 Thanks.

2 DR. RICHMOND: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Next on our agenda  
4 is Dr. Sally Tice, Legislative Consultant  
5 with Pennsylvania Association For Marriage  
6 and American Family Therapy.

7 DR. TICE: Good morning, Chairman  
8 Sturla, Chairman Adolph, and members of the  
9 committee. I appreciate this opportunity to  
10 present testimony on the House Bill 2352 on  
11 behalf of the Pennsylvania Association for  
12 Marriage and Family therapy.

13 My name is Dr. Sally Tice. I'm a  
14 Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in  
15 private practice in the Harrisburg area. And  
16 I'm a Legislative Consultant for the  
17 Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and  
18 Family Therapy, or PAMFT. That's a state  
19 division of the American Association for  
20 Marriage and Family therapy, AAMFT.

21 AAFMT is the national Professional  
22 Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.  
23 It represents the professional interests of  
24 marriage and family therapists leading the

1 way in increasing understanding, research and  
2 education in the field, and ensuring that the  
3 public's needs are met by well-qualified  
4 practitioners.

5 The Pennsylvania Association for  
6 Marriage and Family Therapy is vitally  
7 interested in House Bill 2352. And in an  
8 effort to provide greater protection for  
9 citizens of Pennsylvania for a need of mental  
10 health services, PAMFT pursued and succeeded  
11 in gaining licensure for Pennsylvania's  
12 marriage and family therapists in 1998.  
13 Licensure ensures a high standard of  
14 education, supervised experience for any  
15 license therapist of that prospective clients  
16 might consult. PAMFT is concerned that House  
17 Bill 2352, a proposal for licensing  
18 individuals with only bachelor's level  
19 training would confuse and mislead the  
20 public, creating an added level of  
21 administrative oversight and offer no  
22 additional protection to Pennsylvania  
23 citizens. We, therefore, speak against  
24 passage of this bill.

1           In order to clearly differentiate the  
2 groups of license behavioral health  
3 professionals who have achieved a high level  
4 of graduate training from the group of human  
5 service workers with only a Bachelor's  
6 degree, it seems important to use a  
7 distinctly different title providing some  
8 form of certification perhaps for bachelor-  
9 level workers rather than licensure would  
10 provide the needed clarity.

11           The proposed LSSW, licensed Social  
12 Service Worker designation is an especially  
13 confusing. The similarity of the proposed  
14 title to the existing LSW, Licensed Social  
15 Worker, and LCSW, Licensed Clinical Social  
16 Worker titles would be extremely confusing  
17 for the public and could easily mislead them  
18 regarding the qualifications of a person  
19 providing service services.

20           Human Services Professional would be a  
21 more distinctive designation. The proposed  
22 LSSW title with accompanying definition and  
23 the requirements for the practice of social  
24 service work are very restrictive.

1           House Bill 2352 attempts to bring all  
2 bachelor-level health service workers under a  
3 social work umbrella. Any new state  
4 certification process needs to be more  
5 inclusive of all professional orientations  
6 and use a title that is more generic as  
7 well. The proposed amendment to House Bill  
8 2352 does provide more generic title and  
9 somewhat more inclusive definition. If this  
10 bill moves forward, the qualifications for  
11 the licensure needs to be similarly revised.

12           Passage of House Bill 2352 as a new  
13 area of governmental oversight in the mental  
14 health field without providing any additional  
15 protection for the citizens of Pennsylvania.  
16 House Bill 2352 clearly states in Section I,  
17 "Acquisition of a license under this act  
18 shall not be made a condition of employment  
19 of a person by the Commonwealth or any of its  
20 political subdivisions, or by nonprofit  
21 agencies." This sets up a licensure process  
22 with all of the administrative requirements  
23 and expenses, it would require that could not  
24 be used by employers who hire human service

1 workers.

2           Why should the Commonwealth of  
3 Pennsylvania become involved in a licensure  
4 process that offers no benefits to its  
5 citizens?

6           Bachelor-level human service workers  
7 do provide many valuable services to the  
8 citizens of the Commonwealth. Developing a  
9 set of standard for these workers and  
10 providing some form of certification is a  
11 worthwhile and desirable endeavor. The  
12 public deserves the added protection this  
13 would provide. However, such an effort has  
14 far-reaching implications. In order to  
15 develop a realistic plan that could be phased  
16 in over time, all of the professional groups,  
17 institutions, and government departments  
18 affected by such a move need to collaborate  
19 and devise a comprehensive plan.

20           House Bill 2352 does not represent  
21 this kind of a thoughtful collaborative  
22 effort. With those concerns in mind, the  
23 Pennsylvania Association for Marriage and  
24 Family Therapists urges the House

1 Professional Licensure Committee to take a  
2 stand against passage of House Bill 2352.

3 Thank you for this opportunity to  
4 share the views of the Pennsylvania  
5 Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

6 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

7 Questions from members?

8 Representative Saylor.

9 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Dr. Tice, in  
10 opposing this, if the licensure was -- I have  
11 multiple questions here I guess.

12 If the bill read that it would require  
13 that a Bachelor's degree be required in  
14 Social Work and licensing, would that go a  
15 part of the direction to make your  
16 association happy with the requirements and  
17 licensing?

18 For instance, if we did license and  
19 required in this bill that it was a condition  
20 of employment with the state and other  
21 agencies, would that solve part of the  
22 problem that you have in objection to this  
23 bill?

24 DR. TICE: Well, then, it makes it a

1 very unrealistic bill. As I understand it,  
2 most of the jobs performed at this level --  
3 well, many of them are still a service job.  
4 And there are people who fill these positions  
5 in many fields beside social work. So I  
6 think it would lead to a great scarcity to  
7 require it. And financially, it would make  
8 it extremely unfeasible at this point until  
9 we develop a larger plan that really can be  
10 phased in over time and involves other  
11 changes as well.

12 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: So you're  
13 saying that there's a shortage in this field  
14 of workers who would qualify for the license,  
15 thereby you wouldn't fill the positions if  
16 you require the Bachelor's license? Does  
17 that sound right?

18 DR. TICE: Well, if you require the  
19 Bachelor of Social Work license, there would  
20 not be enough people. If you require it for  
21 employment, then you couldn't fill a lot of  
22 the positions because there's not money to  
23 pay people at that level, and have them all  
24 be licensed. It would mean lots of positions

1 would not be able to be filled period.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Again, a  
3 question, since you brought the pay up, what  
4 is the going rate, I'll say, for a new hire,  
5 let's say fairly new to the profession, can  
6 you give me any comments on that? Are you  
7 aware of what the starting salary might be?

8 DR. TICE: Marriage and family  
9 therapists do not have bachelor-level degree  
10 programs at this point. We are all either  
11 master's or doctoral level training. So the  
12 pay scale would be very different than for  
13 bachelor-level training.

14 But there are people in many fields  
15 beside social work with Bachelor degrees.  
16 And that would be in psychology, sociology,  
17 family studies, many other areas where they  
18 do go into these jobs, either as their  
19 career, or as a stop gap before they go and  
20 get master's level training. So I'm not  
21 familiar with numbers for all of those  
22 professions.

23 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: I mean, again,  
24 off the top of my head in York County, in our

1 Domestic Relations department and Children &  
2 Youth Services Department, and I might be off  
3 a couple of years off here, salary increases  
4 are changing. But it seems like they enter  
5 around 23,000 to \$25,000, basic starting  
6 salary, which is why I think there's a high  
7 turnover rate because that's a pretty low  
8 salary, even in York County. We're not  
9 Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, but that's not a  
10 great salary. The caseload is very, very  
11 heavy, more than you could really handle, and  
12 most cases again, it's very low pay. And  
13 benefits sometimes, if you're working for the  
14 government, aren't that bad. The salary is  
15 so low that -- let me ask it this way, what  
16 would your recommendations be to improve  
17 those workers who work in Children & Youth  
18 Services and Domestic Relations departments,  
19 how would we as a legislature, if we wanted  
20 to improve, if we did a license, how would we  
21 improve the quality of the personnel who are  
22 working in those agencies as such?

23 DR. TICE: In the long run, I buy into  
24 Jenna's plan. I think we do need all of

1 these people well trained and licensed. It's  
2 just the reality factor where we start.  
3 Again --

4 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Where do we  
5 start, I guess is my question?

6 DR. TICE: Well, that's why my  
7 suggestion is that this really needs to be a  
8 collaborative effort with all of community  
9 service providers, community provider  
10 organizations, state government departments,  
11 etc.

12 I'm not familiar with all of these and  
13 what their requirements are and the budget  
14 considerations and all of those kinds of  
15 things. I think it's a huge undertaking if  
16 we are really going to move to a level of  
17 bachelor-level Licensure. And I'm not sure  
18 this is the best step to start with. I'm not  
19 against that. I think we need that training.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Thank you very  
21 much, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other  
23 members? Just a couple of questions.

24 It looks like you're supportive of

1 some of the amendments that were proposed  
2 earlier that have this person now be called a  
3 licensing and service professional; is that  
4 correct?

5 DR. TICE: That's an improvement.

6 CHAIRMAN STURLA: And then the portion  
7 of the bill that in Section I that says,  
8 "Acquisition of a license shall not be made a  
9 condition of employment by a person with the  
10 Commonwealth or a political subdivisions or  
11 nonprofit agencies."

12 If that line were just removed, and  
13 the bill was silent on that, and also the  
14 bill could say you don't need an accountant's  
15 degree or you don't need something else in  
16 order to be, so if we were just silent on  
17 that, would that help also?

18 DR. TICE: Well, I think that would  
19 create a huge problem.

20 I was at a meeting of a variety of  
21 mental health providers, Jenna phrased some  
22 of those possibilities of moving towards some  
23 sort of standards. And the general reaction  
24 of the community providers was, put us out of

1 business. You know, we can't just can't hire  
2 licensed people. Certainly to set some  
3 standard helps give them something to look  
4 at. But if it's a move for requiring that  
5 license, then there's a real problem.

6 CHAIRMAN STURLA: But I'm not saying  
7 that we're requiring. I'm not saying if we  
8 are not requiring. If we were just silent on  
9 that, we don't anywhere in the bill say  
10 that -- you know, I mean, I don't think that  
11 -- and I have to check -- but I don't think  
12 that the law that licensed social worker says  
13 that it's not a requirement that you have a  
14 licensed Social Work degree in order to work  
15 as a front-line social worker.

16 DR. TICE: We only have title  
17 protection at this point.

18 CHAIRMAN STURLA: But there's nothing  
19 that says that it can't be a condition of  
20 employment? So is there any reason why for a  
21 licensed Human Service Professional, we don't  
22 declare that it can't be a condition of  
23 employment?

24 I mean, I'm curious as to why that

1 language was put in there in the first place,  
2 other than to allay people's fears that say,  
3 "Oh, then they're going to say there's a  
4 requirement." But if it doesn't say there's  
5 a requirement, we haven't done anything.

6 DR. TICE: And then my concern is  
7 still the one I voiced here, then I don't  
8 think it's designed in a way that's inclusive  
9 of other professions, as it needs to be.  
10 And, again, I question whether it provides  
11 any added protection. At this point  
12 employers can look for people with a  
13 Bachelor's degree in Social Work. It doesn't  
14 provide more than that that I can see.

15 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. And then I  
16 guess one final question which deals with  
17 some of your testimony on the first page  
18 where you talk about the licensed person with  
19 a Bachelor's degree versus at the top of your  
20 second page, somebody with graduate training.

21 DR. TICE: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN STURLA: As I understand it,  
23 maybe I have this wrong. If you have a  
24 graduate degree in Social Work or in Family

1       Therapy or in some of the other related  
2       professions, you can go practice as an  
3       individual?

4               DR. TICE:    Yes.

5               CHAIRMAN STURLA:   A Bachelor's degree  
6       in Social Work does not allow you the  
7       opportunity to go practice as an individual;  
8       is that correct?

9               DR. TICE:    Well, since we only have  
10       title protection, actually, you could go do  
11       therapy if you wanted to.  I don't think  
12       there would be any legal reason you couldn't.

13               CHAIRMAN STURLA:   Wow.

14               DR. TICE:    That's why we really like  
15       to practice that.

16               CHAIRMAN STURLA:   Well.  All right.  I  
17       learn something new every day.

18               Any other questions?

19               REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH:  I just have a  
20       quick comment.

21               Thank you for your testimony, Doctor.

22               It seems like to me, you know, you  
23       brought some points out.  It is confusing  
24       with all the initials and so forth and the

1 degree of education.

2 But just a comment, in order to  
3 improve the quality of the personnel out  
4 there taking care of these people, you have  
5 to start somewhere.

6 DR. TICE: That is true.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: And we may not  
8 try to get in Jenna's world right away, but  
9 you have to start somewhere. And licensing  
10 seems to be the very first step. I know it's  
11 a confusing. There's no question, you  
12 bringing about out a lot of points that I  
13 agree with, as far as confusion to the  
14 public. Okay? But I think we have a more  
15 serious problem here with possibly  
16 unqualified folks working in this field.

17 DR. TICE: My concern is they will  
18 continue to, but, yes, we do need to start  
19 somewhere.

20 We would prefer a more inclusive  
21 approach that considers how this can be the  
22 first step and what the next step is.

23 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Right.

24 DR. TICE: The description and the

1 base, and then it would require at some point  
2 from there. This doesn't feel like a good  
3 start for the other professions, who also  
4 provide many of these workers at a bachelor  
5 level.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: There's a lot  
7 of professions that all have the same title,  
8 as increase their education, they just keep  
9 adding initials, okay, to the end of their  
10 name. You have CPA, MALLA, I mean, they just  
11 keep on, Ph.D. in taxation. They just keep  
12 adding initials. Okay? But the one guy  
13 still is a CPA. Do you know what I mean?

14 DR. TICE: Uh-huh.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: So maybe  
16 instead of having all of these different  
17 words, they keep on adding the type of degree  
18 that you have at the end of your profession.  
19 I'm just a practical guy, I guess. But it  
20 sounds like that would work to me.

21 DR. TICE: We'd just like to be sure  
22 it doesn't include just one of those sets of  
23 letters.

24 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: I'm not

1 qualified enough to know the difference  
2 between social service worker, Licensed  
3 Social Worker, Licensed Clinical Social  
4 Worker. I'm not there. I don't know what  
5 the difference between those letters are.

6 DR. TICE: And the average citizen in  
7 Pennsylvania doesn't either.

8 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Hopefully, the  
9 good Chairman here will fill me in all of the  
10 differences and what all of those initials  
11 mean.

12 DR. TICE: And most people don't know  
13 the differences between a psychologist and  
14 marriage and family therapists, but there are  
15 those differences. And it's important that  
16 all of them feed into this pool.

17 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: That's why we  
18 have these hearings, to confuse us all.

19 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

20 DR. TICE: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Next on the agenda  
22 is Dr. Holly Branthoover, President-Elect of  
23 Pennsylvania's Counseling Association.

24 DR. BRANTHOVER: Good morning,

1 Chairman Sturla, and members of the House  
2 Professional Licensure Committee.

3 My name is Dr. Holly Branthoover. And  
4 I am the President-Elect of the Pennsylvania  
5 Counseling Association. I'm currently a full  
6 time faculty member in the Counselor  
7 Education Department at Indiana State  
8 University of Pennsylvania. I hold a license  
9 as a professional counselor in Pennsylvania.  
10 I'm a national certified counselor and a  
11 certified school counselor. And I spent the  
12 majority of my career working in in Allegheny  
13 County, 2 1/2 years at Allegheny County  
14 Children & Youth and family, four years for  
15 the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as  
16 a corrections counselor and SEI Pittsburgh,  
17 as well as working at a juvenile residential  
18 facility. I'm currently a specialist in  
19 crisis work. I serve in Allegheny County Red  
20 Cross Disaster Action Team and worked with  
21 the Hurricane Katrina nationally.

22 My testimony here today represents  
23 concerns that the 561 members of PCA  
24 regarding House Bill 2352, which seeks to

1 establish a license as a discipline of social  
2 service worker. Although PCA does not speak  
3 for the more than 3400 licensed professional  
4 counselors in Pennsylvania, we do believe  
5 that we speak on their behalf and their  
6 interests.

7 PCA appreciates the opportunity to  
8 offer testimony on this important issue and  
9 which to express opposition to this bill.  
10 Our opposition to this bill encompasses three  
11 areas: Proposed need, licensing preparation,  
12 and the intent of this bill.

13 Need: The licensure of professional  
14 counselors, marriage and family therapists  
15 and social workers came after a long period  
16 of debate and consideration. The major  
17 legislative intent of Act 136 was to protect  
18 the public from unprofessional, improper,  
19 unauthorized and unqualified counseling  
20 practitioners. Act 136 clearly suggested  
21 that legislation was necessary to offer  
22 protection for individuals who sought  
23 counseling services in a private sector, but  
24 the need for such protection did not extend

1 to public services recorded by the  
2 Commonwealth or any political subdivision of  
3 the Commonwealth. In essence, the  
4 legislature considered the existing facility  
5 licensing provisions, which are tied to  
6 funding streams, sufficient to protect the  
7 public against improper services provided in  
8 public sector or community based  
9 organizations.

10 It is irresponsible to entrust someone  
11 without a graduate degree who works  
12 independently in private or group practice,  
13 human services position without ongoing  
14 supervision from a supervisor with a more  
15 advanced credential. Should that occur, it  
16 would not only fail to protect the public  
17 safety, but potentially put public safety in  
18 jeopardy undercutting the original intent of  
19 Act 136.

20 One may tenably assume that candidates  
21 for licensure as social services worker will,  
22 in fact, be employed in community-service  
23 agencies which are customarily funded through  
24 public sources and licensed by some state

1 government entity. Noticing this then raises  
2 the fundamental question as to need for a  
3 professional license for individuals working  
4 in a licensed agency where the activities of  
5 the agency are already regulated and the  
6 individuals working in those agencies are not  
7 now required to be licensed.

8 Licensing preparation. The scope of  
9 services relative to the licensed social  
10 services worker also needs to be examined.  
11 The foundation of these services seems to be  
12 anchored in "Social Work Theory" at the  
13 exclusion of other theoretical approaches.  
14 What about undergraduate degrees in human  
15 services, human development, rehabilitation  
16 services or psychology. Certainly,  
17 individuals graduating from these programs  
18 may be equally qualified to assume positions  
19 in community services described in this  
20 proposed legislation. There is no evidence  
21 to suggest that this single theoretical  
22 approach is any more or less beneficial in  
23 enhancing the psychosocial functioning of  
24 individuals, couples, families or groups.

1       Such an approach, does however, advance a  
2       political economic agenda for the social work  
3       industry.

4               An added concern related to this scope  
5       of services would be whether someone with an  
6       undergraduate degree would be adequately  
7       prepared to carry out the listed functions.  
8       Undergraduate curricula require coursework in  
9       many areas with only a portion being devoted  
10      to work in a particular major. Because  
11      someone is exposed to a concept in a course  
12      or reads about a concept in the chapter of a  
13      book cannot be considered adequate  
14      preparation to sufficiently address workplace  
15      issues. This is why graduate education has  
16      been promoted as a minimum criterion for  
17      professional recognition in the human  
18      services. Graduate education simply provides  
19      a concentration of learning activities that  
20      persists in a more in-depth understanding of  
21      philosophical and practical issues relative  
22      to a professional discipline as well as  
23      extensive supervised field experience wherein  
24      the level of responsibility increases over

1 time. This exposure simply does not exist in  
2 the undergraduate level and cannot be assumed  
3 to be met by supervision.

4 Intent. The stated intent of this  
5 proposed legislation also needs to be  
6 challenged. This legislation would have  
7 minimal, if any, impact on public safety  
8 since agencies responsible for the scope of  
9 services described for the social service  
10 workers are public agencies which would fall  
11 under the regulations of the Commonwealth.  
12 Again, such agencies are immune from  
13 requiring licensure of employees. Without a  
14 substantial public safety issue, this bill  
15 must be considered as a vehicle to advance a  
16 single professional discipline.

17 The scope of practice of social  
18 services lies well within the realm of other  
19 professional groups. Counselors preparing  
20 for professional licensure are exposed to and  
21 often participate in these same activities.  
22 In addition, LPC's, other groups, such as  
23 certified school counselors, a master's level  
24 of Certified Addiction Counselors, Master

1       Addiction Counselors and Rehabilitation  
2       Counselors might also possess the skills and  
3       abilities necessary to provide supervision in  
4       the event that you all believe that this is a  
5       meaningful legislation. This proposed  
6       legislation seems to negate the existence of  
7       some other professional groups simply  
8       embellish the field of Social Work as a  
9       single discipline that should be recognized  
10      for these activities. It also seems quite  
11      apparent that the Social Work leadership in  
12      Pennsylvania continues to marginalize  
13      Professional Counselors since this proposed  
14      legislation does not recognize the  
15      supervisory capacity of LPCs, who are indeed  
16      included under the auspices of Act 136.

17                To suggest that bachelor-level  
18      individuals have the skills and abilities  
19      necessary to be recognized as licensed  
20      professionals diminishes the professional  
21      status of other disciplines. Professional  
22      status in the human services should be  
23      restricted to individuals who complete  
24      specific graduate course studies and receive

1 supervision for an extended period of time by  
2 other licensed professionals.

3 Noting the absence of any clear  
4 evidence that the public would be safer or  
5 better served, it is the opinion of PCA that  
6 this attempt to license bachelor-level social  
7 service workers and having the license  
8 predicated on social work theory simply  
9 advances the discipline of social work and  
10 therefore represents biased and  
11 discriminatory legislation. Certainly the  
12 exclusion of LCPs from the list of  
13 disciplines recognized as qualified  
14 supervisors supports this opinion.

15 Concerns about the quality of human  
16 services made available to the public led the  
17 Legislature to establish licensing criteria  
18 for professional groups which clearly  
19 recognized the need for graduate education as  
20 one of the fundamental criteria. The  
21 licensing of bachelor-level social service  
22 workers clearly seems to be a step backwards  
23 in promoting quality human social services in  
24 the Commonwealth. Thus, PCA stands opposed

1 to this proposed legislation.

2 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from  
3 members? I've got a couple of questions.

4 On page 1 of your testimony, you say,  
5 "In essence, the Legislature considered  
6 existing facility licensing provisions tied  
7 to public funding seems sufficient to protect  
8 the public against improper services provided  
9 to public sector or community-based  
10 organizations."

11 So you're saying that we just wouldn't  
12 pay for it if it wasn't good? Is that --

13 DR. BRANTHOVER: No, Act 136, which  
14 is the act that licensed social workers, MFT.  
15 and LPCs excludes the requirement to have  
16 workers in Commonwealth agencies licensed.  
17 So they don't have to be licensed. And I  
18 believe that had come up in front the  
19 committee, particularly when many of the  
20 human service positions are Civil Service or  
21 government positions, which are under Act 136  
22 excluded from requiring a license.

23 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. And you're  
24 saying we shouldn't require a license of

1 those people?

2 DR. BRANTHOOVER: Act 136 is the  
3 license over all of the master's level  
4 people. So it already does regulate  
5 licensure for the private sector at the  
6 master's level.

7 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay.

8 DR. BRANTHOOVER: Act 136 doesn't  
9 include bachelor's level at all.

10 CHAIRMAN STURLA: I guess I'm confused  
11 here. Because when I get to page 3 of your  
12 testimony, "One may tenably assume that  
13 candidates for licensure as social services  
14 worker will, in fact, be employed in  
15 community-service agencies that are  
16 customarily funded through public sources and  
17 licensed by some state government entity.  
18 Noting this then raises the fundamental  
19 question as to need for a professional  
20 licensure for individuals working in a  
21 licensed agency where the activities of the  
22 agency are already regulated and the  
23 individuals working in those agencies are not  
24 now required to be licensed."

1           I mean, I understand that Act 136 may  
2           say that they don't require them to be  
3           licensed at this point in time, but are you  
4           saying you would advocate against having  
5           individuals working in those facilities be  
6           licensed?

7           DR. BRANTHOVER: At the bachelor's  
8           level?

9           CHAIRMAN STURLA: Yeah.

10          DR. BRANTHOVER: What our stance is  
11          that we can agree that we should start  
12          somewhere, which we heard by what Dr. Tice  
13          was testifying about.

14          But particularly, I think what you're  
15          questioning is the same thing that you  
16          brought up with Dr. Tice that right now as  
17          the bill that we're looking at today, it is  
18          not making a license a requirement. And even  
19          the intent of our prior licensing legislation  
20          excluded state agencies from having to  
21          license.

22          So if state agencies are again  
23          excluded and it's not required that state  
24          agencies to hire licensed people, this covers

1 almost no one.

2 CHAIRMAN STURLA: All right. Well, I  
3 guess my question is, well, some people say  
4 it's unrealistic, if we could get the bill.  
5 And we got legislation that mandated that  
6 those people be licensed, would your group be  
7 in favor of that?

8 DR. BRANTHOOVER: It would move it  
9 closer toward us being in favor.

10 The other large issue we have is the  
11 exclusivity of the way that this bill was  
12 written, not including all of the available  
13 licensed professionals in the Commonwealth as  
14 supervisors and basing it on social work  
15 theory. So there's two parts.

16 If it were required, that would  
17 certainly be a step in the right direction.  
18 It has not been so at this point.

19 However, step two is if it was  
20 required for employment, there needs to be  
21 changes in regard to the way the bill is  
22 structured to be inclusive of all disciplines  
23 in Pennsylvania, particularly all disciplines  
24 that are available for licensure already as

1 supervisor.

2 LCP was the only discipline in  
3 Pennsylvania that were specifically excluded  
4 from being allowed to supervise human service  
5 workers.

6 CHAIRMAN STURLA: All right.

7 Any questions?

8 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Just a follow-  
9 up. Who excluded them, the legislation?

10 DR. BRANTHOVER: The way the bill is  
11 written, LCPs are not included as potential  
12 supervisors. I did not see that was in the  
13 changes this morning, because I just received  
14 them.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Did that  
16 change?

17 CHAIRMAN STURLA: I'm getting  
18 indication that it is included in the changes  
19 this morning.

20 DR. BRANTHOVER: Then certainly that  
21 would be helpful moving toward more inclusive  
22 in general.

23 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. Representative  
24 Wansacz.

1           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Thank you, Mr.  
2 Chairman.

3           You're at IUP?

4           DR. BRANTHOOVER: Correct.

5           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: You have a  
6 master's degree program, if I'm correct. How  
7 many students do you graduate roughly a year  
8 with that?

9           DR. BRANTHOOVER: There are  
10 approximately 300 students in our program  
11 right now. The last graduation I coordinated  
12 I believe approximately 30, 35 students at  
13 the master's level.

14           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: When you're  
15 graduating, are you seeing a full placement  
16 of all of these students? Is that the  
17 something that the university follows up on?

18           DR. BRANTHOOVER: We do. I don't know  
19 those numbers.

20           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: What I'm  
21 wondering is, because I and also  
22 Representative Kotik, so we know the fine  
23 outstanding products that it produces.

24           DR. BRANTHOOVER: I got my Bachelor's

1 degree. I am a product of the state.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: I'm on the  
3 board of alumni. What I could tell you is we  
4 are seeing a problem, I'm sure you're seeing  
5 that too, friends that went through the  
6 program down at IUP with a master's, I  
7 understand you let them see different  
8 students, and they told me about the problems  
9 that are facing, so what they're seeing from  
10 when they graduated, you know, school to now,  
11 being in a master's program, and seeing  
12 students come through a whole bunch of other  
13 different social problems, and different  
14 things. These are kids. Let's face it,  
15 these are young kids.

16 With seeing that problem, do you not  
17 agree that we should maybe have more trained  
18 people that are out there working with these  
19 families, than just somebody right off the  
20 street? And is this something that your  
21 organization can say with some slight changes  
22 with this bill, some major change or  
23 compromise, could we get more qualified  
24 people into these homes?

1 DR. BRANTHOOVER: That is a way to  
2 begin. Changes are necessary.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: So you would  
4 agree then we should maybe move in that  
5 direction with some type of licensure, but in  
6 a broader scope?

7 DR. BRANTHOOVER: I actually really  
8 like the testimony of Dr. Sally Tice with  
9 regard to possibly the confusion that some of  
10 the initials and things. There may be a  
11 certification is a way to go.

12 But I also believe that the exclusion  
13 of not requiring or not requiring state  
14 agencies, my career was in state agencies. I  
15 worked as a corrections counselor. We  
16 weren't required to be licensed because we  
17 were inundated through Department of  
18 Corrections and Civil Service tested, which  
19 set the qualifications. So I do believe that  
20 there's certainly work to be done,  
21 particularly with Civil Service, and maybe  
22 state positions, and how we get all of that  
23 on board.

24 I worked for 2 1/2 years for Allegheny

1 County Children & Youth. And we were Civil  
2 Service employees. So as this reads, it  
3 appears to me they would be excluded, because  
4 that doesn't require state agencies to follow  
5 this. That wording in there that says they  
6 are excluded seems to negate the fact that  
7 Children & Youth workers, which we're all  
8 worried about here, clearly were a problem in  
9 Allegheny County for 2 1/2 years I worked  
10 that beat. So I know the problems, high  
11 turnover, ineffective services.

12 But if we exclude state agencies or  
13 Civil Service position from this license,  
14 then how does the license help? Do you see  
15 what I mean?

16 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: I understand.  
17 I agree with you. If it's good enough for  
18 the private community, it should be good  
19 enough for the state to follow the same thing.  
20 I'm 100 percent in agreement with you.

21 Again, to come back from my earlier,  
22 the big problem we're going to have is  
23 figuring out grandfathering, how we go ahead  
24 and do that. And do you have any suggestions

1 on that, as far as what this committee should  
2 be looking at, because, obviously, we have  
3 individuals that may have been working in the  
4 field for ten years, but don't have that  
5 degree?

6 DR. BRANTHOVER: I can speak from the  
7 experience of grandfathering into the  
8 master's license, because I got my LCP by  
9 being grandfathered. I had been working in  
10 the field. And we had to take the exam. We  
11 had to have "X" number of years of  
12 experience. We had to have people sign off  
13 on what kind of work we had been doing, to  
14 make sure it was within that scope of  
15 practice, sign off that we were of good moral  
16 character, those kind of issues. But I do  
17 support others who said said if we are going  
18 to grandfather, an exam is definitely  
19 something we would want to look at, and other  
20 requirements as well, maybe similar to what's  
21 in the process for how we handled LPCs  
22 because they are the most recently licensed  
23 professionals at master's level. And we have  
24 done an entire grandfathering phase of that.

1           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: One of the  
2 questions I have about licensing is, we  
3 rarely hear these students graduating with  
4 four years of master's degree, and getting  
5 paid \$20,000-something and barely paying the  
6 rent, barely making it. Now, if they have to  
7 go ahead and take continuing education  
8 classes and everything else, how are we ever  
9 going to get more students to go into these  
10 classes? That's why I asked everybody about  
11 how many students are graduating? And I  
12 think that's a reason for the higher  
13 turnover.

14           DR. BRANTHOVER: You're right. I  
15 think it's a recent problem that human  
16 services workers don't make particularly high  
17 income. But many people go into the jobs  
18 anyway.

19           And I know for the Department of  
20 Corrections, we had ongoing training  
21 requirements that they provided for us. So  
22 people are getting some ongoing training.  
23 And I do believe that continuing education is  
24 important, and certainly included in this

1 bill, because it is important.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Well, I think  
3 it's important, but I was just wondering how  
4 students should do it and they're also paying  
5 back loans at \$430 a credit, and have to take  
6 so many credits towards CEUs, it could be a  
7 very difficult to keep students into this at  
8 such a low paying field. And that's my  
9 concern. There is a need. But I'm worried  
10 that, you know, we may price the people right  
11 out of this profession. And that's what  
12 concerns me.

13 DR. BRANTHOVER: It's a valid  
14 concern. But I believe people who are  
15 dedicated will get their training. And  
16 agencies that know that their workers have to  
17 have it may step in and offer those  
18 trainings. Then you're not paying full  
19 college credit.

20 I just went to training that for two  
21 days it cost \$285 and it was two days, and I  
22 got 11 hours. So you don't have to get just  
23 college credit for your continuing  
24 education. There are trainings that come

1 with that as well. So that these prices are  
2 within the range of someone is making \$30,000  
3 or \$24,000.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Representative  
6 Saylor.

7 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Dr. Branthoover,  
8 I agree with my colleagues, Mr. Wansacz, IUP  
9 is one of the highest institutions of  
10 learning. I went there myself.

11 I want to clarify your statement on  
12 talking about Master's degree. You're not  
13 advocating people that in the field of social  
14 work you have to master's degrees to deal  
15 with Children & Youth Services or work in  
16 Domestic Relations, am I correct?

17 DR. BRANTHOVER: No.

18 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: That really  
19 would create a major problem.

20 DR. BRANTHOVER: That would be  
21 prohibitive.

22 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: For what we  
23 offer in the county and state. What I'm  
24 seeing in your testimony for us, one, we need

1 to raise salaries. I think even County  
2 Commissioners and other agencies need to  
3 raise salaries in this field because of the  
4 high turnover, the case work, trying to find  
5 people to fill these spots. If we did a  
6 phase in of this legislation, and I'm talking  
7 about not necessarily licensing, but  
8 requiring agencies over a period, I'm going  
9 to say ten years, I'm just going to pull a  
10 number out of my head, that within ten years  
11 they must have all of their individual  
12 caseworkers in a certain classification  
13 license.

14 Does that sound reasonable, because I  
15 think when you're talking about filling these  
16 roles, there is a shortage. That's why  
17 they're pulling people off the streets. The  
18 salary, it doesn't matter if you're a man or  
19 a woman working in the field, the salary is  
20 so low that it sounds like if whether you're  
21 a mother or you're a father, 30,000,  
22 York County is lower than 30,000, but 30,000  
23 is not a lot of money to raise a family, and  
24 a couple, depending if your husband or your

1 wife is doing the other career, it's very  
2 difficult. And I don't think overnight  
3 you're going to get the county commissioners  
4 to start raising salaries at a rapid pace.  
5 But I think if you would phase in and  
6 requiring more professionalism, we made this  
7 a profession. I still haven't made my  
8 decision about this bill. How do we  
9 improve? Because I know we need to make  
10 improvements.

11 In my dealing with these agencies, I'm  
12 concerned about decisions that are made and  
13 how they're made and then the biases that  
14 sometimes do come out.

15 So the suggestion how we can, I can  
16 say ten years out, ways we can improve this  
17 legislation because I think you've got to  
18 grandfather. There's no way you could pass a  
19 legislation and say all agencies have to do  
20 this.

21 DR. BRANTHOVER: Right.

22 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: But a good  
23 sense of direction from your profession and  
24 others that testified today, and I just

1 thought of it as we hear more and more about  
2 this, "Well, we can't do this now," is how we  
3 get there? Because as legislators, we see  
4 the effects of sometimes things that are  
5 going on in different agencies, the problems  
6 and salaries and everything else. How do we  
7 get this done, get the quality of service we  
8 need for our constituents to review these  
9 agencies, and at the same time make sure that  
10 the counseling and everything else that goes  
11 on is of a professional level?

12 DR. BRANTHOVER: I want to say that I  
13 am supportive of the changes that I've heard  
14 today in regard to making the bill more  
15 inclusive.

16 For example, we heard numbers  
17 graduating from social work programs. If we  
18 said that every caseworker in Pennsylvania  
19 had to have a Social Work degree, we would  
20 have even a bigger shortage, which is why we  
21 propose what about students in psychology, or  
22 family studies who get the same kind of  
23 training at the bachelor's level? So if we  
24 say we're going to do that, it needs to be

1 inclusive so that we're not making a bigger  
2 shortage.

3 Second of all, when we're talking  
4 about supervising those people, the  
5 legislature has found in its wisdom to create  
6 three master levels supervision, social  
7 workers, marriage and family therapists, and  
8 licensed professional counselors. I'm glad  
9 to see that today that that has been amended,  
10 that that is now inclusive. And it doesn't  
11 appear discriminatory in that change.

12 If we are going to phase in a plan, I  
13 think we have to be conscious about what was  
14 mentioned from the committee, that there's  
15 not more confusion added to the consumers or  
16 public. So that the LSSW doesn't look so  
17 much like the LSW, or the LSCW.

18 I like the maybe HSP designation that  
19 was suggested by Sally Tice, so that we're  
20 clearing up some of these inconsistencies.

21 And, of course, grandfathering, which  
22 we had talked significantly about is going to  
23 have to be phased in over time. But I do  
24 believe that there are problems with

1 bachelor-level workers. Someone with an  
2 accounting degree or other people coming in  
3 who don't have this background, it is  
4 problematic.

5           You mentioned earlier burnout. And  
6 that kind of peaked my interest because I  
7 have a background in crisis. And burnout  
8 typically comes under conditions of being  
9 over worked, under appreciated and under  
10 paid. All of those factors are at work with  
11 our bachelor's level people. So there is  
12 something to be done. And I've heard that we  
13 need to start somewhere. We would be  
14 supportive of starting somewhere, if it's  
15 more general inclusive and thought-out in a  
16 collaborative way that doesn't advance only  
17 one discipline.

18           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Thank you very  
19 much for your time.

20           CHAIRMAN STURLA: Any questions from  
21 the members? My staff, I'll warn them, it  
22 looks like we'll be negotiating on this.  
23 Don't be fearful of being overworked and  
24 underpaid.

1           Next on the agenda is Arthur Ring,  
2           he's a vice president of governmental  
3           relations public policy and external affairs  
4           relations, Pressley Ridge.

5           MR. RING: Are we pressed for time?

6           CHAIRMAN STURLA: We're running about  
7           15 minutes late.

8           MR. RING: Good morning. My name is  
9           Arthur Ring and I am the Vice President of  
10          Government Relations, Public Policy and  
11          External Affairs at Pressley Ridge. Thank  
12          you for the opportunity to speak before you  
13          today on the issue of professional  
14          licensure.

15          Pressley Ridge provides a continuum of  
16          services to troubled and developmentally  
17          challenged children while helping these  
18          children remain close to their families and  
19          communities. A nonprofit organization  
20          founded in 1832, Pressley Ridge offers  
21          innovative programs at Delaware, Kentucky,  
22          Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania Texas, Virginia,  
23          West Virginia and the District of Columbia.  
24          Our \$72 million annual budget provides

1 therapeutic interventions through  
2 residential, treatment foster care,  
3 community-based services and education  
4 services. Through our 1,200 employees,  
5 Pressley Ridge and our partners provide  
6 services to over 3500 children and their  
7 families each day. Nearly 50 percent of  
8 these children reside in Pennsylvania. In  
9 Pennsylvania, Pressley Ridge specifically  
10 provides residential care, therapeutic foster  
11 care, educational and community based  
12 services to children in 18 programs located  
13 primarily in the southern half of the state.

14 There are four critical areas that  
15 confront us in the individual health  
16 behavioral and child welfare today.  
17 Disparity between the actual cost of services  
18 and reimbursement rates; challenges in  
19 recruitment of qualified staff and their long  
20 term retention; unfunded mandates and  
21 increased demands for technology and data.

22 In many ways, recruitment and  
23 retention of qualified staff is the major  
24 issue within our field. Our own therapeutic

1 alliance research has shown that experienced,  
2 committed staff are directly related to  
3 positive outcomes for kids. And positive  
4 outcomes for children and families relate  
5 directly to effectiveness and efficiencies  
6 within the system, making the best use of the  
7 dollars that are available.

8 Pressley Ridge employs a variety of  
9 human service professionals in Pennsylvania  
10 to work in the programs we offer to provide  
11 services to children and families. For many  
12 of our programs, the basic educational  
13 requirement is a bachelor's degree. This  
14 requirement is consistent with our model of  
15 care and with regulatory and accreditation  
16 requirements.

17 House bill 2352 would create a social  
18 service worker license granted upon meeting  
19 the following criteria:

20 A bachelor's degree in Social Work and  
21 passage of an examination designed to test  
22 the knowledge relevant to providing human  
23 services and the application of that  
24 knowledge to a variety of age and disability

1 groups or a bachelor's degree with a major in  
2 psychology, sociology, human services,  
3 behavioral science, sociology, psychology,  
4 child development or human development,  
5 passage of an examination, and, a  
6 pre-determined number of hours working under  
7 clinical supervision in the field of human  
8 services.

9           The attainment of a social service  
10 worker license provides employers like  
11 Pressley Ridge with a means to determine if  
12 candidates have met a minimum threshold of  
13 education and experience. The attainment of  
14 a social service worker license demonstrates  
15 to us as an employer that the candidate is  
16 committed to staying in the profession. The  
17 license also provides for continuing  
18 educational requirements and ethical practice  
19 standards to which the candidate must  
20 adhere. The ethical oversight provided to  
21 those holding the license gives the employer  
22 a greater sense of trust -- with a better  
23 sense of trust with a job candidate.  
24 Finally, the social service worker licensee

1 realizes that unethical behavior likely will  
2 cause removal from employment and a  
3 revocation of the license they have worked to  
4 earn.

5 Pressley Ridge supports the creation  
6 of a social service worker license for these  
7 reasons. Those who work in child welfare and  
8 work with troubled and challenging children  
9 and families often have a very difficult  
10 job. Those who are adequately prepared for  
11 the work they will encounter tend to stay on  
12 the job longer and getting a higher level of  
13 job satisfaction out of their work.

14 As we noted earlier, our own research  
15 has shown that experienced, committed staff  
16 are directly related to achieving positive  
17 outcomes for kids. And positive outcomes do  
18 represent the best utilization of available  
19 financial resources.

20 Again, thank you for the opportunity  
21 to discuss professional licensure on behalf  
22 of Pressley Ridge and other children and  
23 family organizations. We look forward to  
24 continuing conversations on this topic in the

1 future.

2 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Question from the  
3 members? Just one question I have. Page 3  
4 of your testimony, your second point about  
5 "House Bill 2352 requiring a pre-determined  
6 number of hours working under clinical  
7 supervision working in the field of human  
8 services."

9 Should we increase that every year  
10 until we get to a point where everybody has  
11 got the equivalent of a Social Work degree or  
12 are we okay with, as an advocate here, well,  
13 it doesn't matter if you have a degree, as  
14 long as you have some credits and so forth?

15 MR. RING: You're talking about  
16 raising the bar every year?

17 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Yeah.

18 MR. RING: I think in the beginning, I  
19 know we talked about the same numbers, and at  
20 some point changing that. I say the academy  
21 of certified social workers and also  
22 certified social work manager. The former  
23 does not change any requirement. The latter  
24 has increased its continuing education units

1 over the years and also pushed it in a  
2 specific direction, away from the clinical  
3 world and into managerial sciences.

4 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. RING: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Next we have Cecily  
7 Randolph, a BSW recent graduate from  
8 Carlow College.

9 MS. RANDOLPH: Good morning, Chairman  
10 Sturla, and Chairman Adolph, and members of  
11 the committee and staff. I thank you for the  
12 opportunity to voice my opinion on this  
13 important issue.

14 My name is Cecily Randolph, and I  
15 was received my Bachelor's degree in Social  
16 Work from Carlow University in Pittsburgh,  
17 Pennsylvania.

18 As a former client of the Pennsylvania  
19 Department of Public Welfare, and now as a  
20 provider, my primary concern is to provide  
21 consumers with the best possible services.

22 The National Association of Social  
23 Workers Code of Ethics mandates as its sixth  
24 ethical principle, "Social workers practice

1 within their areas of competence and develop  
2 and enhance their professional expertise."  
3 Fulfilling this mandate social workers  
4 continually strive to increase their  
5 professional knowledge and skills to apply  
6 them in practice. The code of ethics  
7 specifies practice in fields where social  
8 workers will promote the well-being of  
9 clients and minimize harm to others. Others  
10 working in human services are not governed by  
11 similar code or principles.

12 Any person with a Bachelor's degree  
13 may be intelligent, helpful and intuitive,  
14 but I think prior testifiers demonstrated  
15 those qualities do not necessarily prepare  
16 you for a career in human services. Those of  
17 us with BSWs are those things, as well as  
18 competent and prepared to engage clients in  
19 the human service system, to provide  
20 evaluation and assessment, to develop  
21 interventions, and to assist in plans for  
22 termination of services.

23 Shouldn't we as a society seek to hire  
24 the most competent staff? Clients in the

1 human services system are entitled to the  
2 same quality services as an individual  
3 expects in a health care system. I would  
4 also state that BSW professionals are well  
5 prepared and competent to work as the initial  
6 point of contact within any social service  
7 system organization. In addition, BSW  
8 students study hundreds of theories, the NASW  
9 code of ethics, various practice methods and  
10 during the role play receive important  
11 feedback from our professors. As social work  
12 interns, BSWs are required to complete a  
13 minimum of 500 hours of field experience.  
14 BSW professionals are ready to assist those  
15 in need.

16 In most professions, licensure sets a  
17 level of professionalism. For social workers  
18 on every level of education, licensure  
19 provides this standard. I ask you today to  
20 give the social service consumers of  
21 Pennsylvania the competent staff they deserve  
22 by considering the creation of the human  
23 service license.

24 I also wanted to add that, as noted

1 with the additions or changes in the  
2 amendment that we are now -- NASW has offered  
3 the licensing professional instead of the  
4 LSSW, to kind of minimize confusion and  
5 refine the scope of services.

6 And then, also, I think with most  
7 degrees that are obtained in bachelor-level,  
8 the level of what social work students on a  
9 bachelor-level have to go through, that is  
10 not something that is a standard for most  
11 degrees but bachelor-level.

12 We are also required by professional  
13 accreditation body to have these in our  
14 programs. It's just something that the  
15 school gets to develop on their own. The  
16 CSWE, Counsel Social Work Education, is  
17 watching and making sure that we are meeting  
18 our goals and our mandates, and just not  
19 allowing us to, you know, be there and be in  
20 school and not have any kind of supervision  
21 for this education that we're receiving.

22 There also is no professional code of  
23 ethics for most undergraduate in master level  
24 programs. And I think that is an important

1 thing for all students working, that you, in  
2 the human services field, you have some body  
3 that is watching you and looking over your  
4 shoulder to say, "What are you doing as a  
5 provider"?

6           Additionally, the degrees that are  
7 being included, I think that one has to  
8 understand for psychology and sociology  
9 degrees, they're not required to do any field  
10 experience, when they're graduating. So they  
11 haven't taken that theory and actually  
12 utilized it in the community in real  
13 practice. And for that, we should understand  
14 that social work students have, you know,  
15 reached a bar that is not set for other  
16 programs. I just wanted to add that.

17           CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

18           Questions from the members?

19           Comments?

20           I'll add I think what we found here  
21 today is that we're getting into some of the  
22 "which comes first the chicken or the egg"?  
23 Do we say that we have professionals that  
24 have attained a certain level of education,

1 and then require that -- or start to require  
2 that we fill certain positions with people,  
3 like what we're doing today, you have to fill  
4 students or people at a certain level, and  
5 then figure whether we can license them or  
6 not? And I think we're going to get into a  
7 little bit of that as we move through this,  
8 and perhaps through the sunrise process, and  
9 some of this as we negotiate this bill and  
10 try to figure out how to work through this,  
11 maybe to establish some of those standards  
12 for the future. If you don't have a degree  
13 in Social Work, maybe you do have to have  
14 some of these competencies displayed before  
15 you could have certain positions and do those  
16 kind of things.

17 Obviously, as I pointed out to the  
18 staff earlier, some of this stuff we'll be  
19 negotiating over the next few months, and,  
20 hopefully, not the next few years. But we'll  
21 put our nose to the grindstone.

22 Thank you for your testimony today and  
23 thanks to everyone who testified.

24 With that, if there are no comments,

1 we'll adjourn the meeting.

2 (Proceedings concluded at 11:58 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Lois Sikoski, Notary Public in  
and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do  
hereby certify that the foregoing 110 pages  
are a true and correct copy of my stenographic  
notes taken on Tuesday, August 5, 2008, at  
5939 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
15213.

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Lois Sikoski, Notary Public

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