



Good morning Chairman Sturla, and Chairman Adolph, members of the committee, and staff.

My name is Jenna Mehnert, and I am the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-PA). I represent over 6,000 degreed social workers who reside throughout the Commonwealth. With 40 accredited social work programs, such as the bachelor and masters programs offered here at Pitt, there are an estimated 40,000 degreed social workers here in Pennsylvania. The mission of NASW-PA is two-fold. We exist to advocate for professional social workers, but true to the values of my profession, NASW-PA is equally committed to the development of sound social policy. At times advocating for professional social workers and advocating for sound social policy can be a difficult balancing act. But, in the end, the interests of consumers should drive all policy change.

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

It is all too easy to be critical of the decisions people make in front-line work. Real people suffer huge consequences when front-line human service professionals fail to do their jobs effectively. The evidence of these failures often reach the front page of local papers all across the Commonwealth: Disabled people die in person care homes, children are molested and beaten in abusive homes, families are devastated by inappropriate removals, or children murder after treatment programs fail to address the root cause of their anger. Our society suffers an immeasurable human, and skyrocketing fiscal costs because social services are not uniformly delivered by appropriate professionals.

If I was to provide any one of you with a manicure or a haircut in a public space for payment, I would need to be licensed. If I want to sell you a car at a dealership, I have to be licensed as a vehicle salesperson. And, when I am dead, a licensed funeral home director will care for my body. But, if someone were to come into my home to decide if I am a fit mother, they would not be licensed. If my 76 year old mother was raped, and went for crisis counseling, the person speaking to her would most likely not be licensed. And, when we send dependent children to residential treatment facilities for services in hopes of reversing some of the horrific damage that has been done to them, the individuals working with those children every day will not be licensed.

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

Licensure raises the bar. It requires appropriate education. It requires individuals to be able to demonstrate a knowledge base by passing an exam. It mandates continuing education, and creates a professional standard.

How can we expect good outcomes if Accounting, English and History majors are making up the front line of a social service systems. I mean no insult to those individuals, but it simply makes no sense. None of you are foolish enough to allow me to operate on your foot without a medical degree and training, so why are we allowing inappropriately educated and non-trained individuals to fulfill some of the most difficult social service roles in our society.

I am delighted to be in Pittsburgh with the members of the House Professional Licensure committee to ask each and every one of you not only to support bachelor level human services licensure, but more than that, to ask you each to champion this cause. What I am asking you to do now is to send a clear message that Pennsylvania's standard of a paraprofessional front-line direct practice workforce is simply unacceptable. Before we license massage therapist or landscapers, let's ensure those folks who are working in the trenches providing front-lines social services have the opportunity to be licensed. While I would like to mandate this license, I recognize that unfortunately a large number of Pennsylvania's front-line human services workforce could not meet the basic requirements necessary to obtain this license. To that end, it is the goal of NASW-PA to create this license, and allow employers the ability to select qualified and licensed professionals to provide their services.

NASW-PA would like to acknowledge Representative Phyllis Mundy for her support in introducing this important piece of legislation. Over the past several months, NASW-PA has been speaking with numerous individuals to gain insight and opinions about how to strengthen this bill. Social workers feel that we should advocate for a license that is exclusively for BSWs, while others feel that the BSW should be on equal footing with other degrees. Having spoken to the members of the PA State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors, as well as, BSW Program Directors and Social Work Deans, NASW-PA has prepared the attached amendment which addresses many of the concerns that were brought to our attention.

The most significant concerns were changing the name of the license from licensed social service worker to licensed human services professional. Thanks to the hard work of Representative Gergely social workers now have title protection, and LSSW would require a person to use SW even when they were not a social work. Therefore, a change to the name of the licensed human services professional is necessary. The second change that came as a result of statewide conversations was to alter the scope of practice for licensed human service professionals. In no

way does NASW-PA want to promote using bachelor level licensed individuals to perform master level work. The purpose of a bachelor level license is to professionalize direct practice functions such as investigating child and elder abuse, care and custody of abused children, and implementation of therapeutic treatment plans for autistic children. Mental health, psychotherapy, and other treatment services should be provided by master level individuals. In rewording the scope of practice, NASW-PA has made it much clearer what functions would be appropriate for a licensed human services professional to perform.

NASW-PA realizes that creating a new license is a complicated process. Hopefully, I have provided you with a strong justification why this license is necessary as well as some details about our on-going efforts to create the most appropriate license possible. However, I am not a bachelor level social worker, so I have asked Patti Ward, BSW of my staff to explain why as a non-traditional college and now graduate student, she supports a professional license for bachelor level individuals.

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 2352

Sponsor:

Printer's No. 3414

Amend title, page 1, lines 8 and 9, by striking out "Licensed Social Service Worker" and inserting  
"Licensed Human Services Professional".

Amend Section 1, page 1, line 19 by striking "and Social Service Workers" and inserting  
"and human services professionals"

Amend bill page 2, line 2, by striking "and social service work" and inserting  
"and human services professionals"

Amend bill, page 2, line 11 and 12, by striking "or as licensed social service workers." and  
inserting

"or as licensed human services professionals."

Amend Section 2, page 2, lines 23 and 24 by striking all of said lines and inserting  
"Licensed Human Services Professional" A human services professional who holds a  
current license under this act.

Amend Section 2, page 2, lines 26 through 30 and page 3, lines 1 through 17 by striking all of  
said lines and inserting

"Practice of human services professional" Holding oneself out to the public by any title  
or description of services incorporating the term "licensed human services professional," or using  
any words or symbols indicating or tending to indicate that the individual is a licensed human  
services professional and, under such description, offering to render or rendering a service under  
the supervision of an agency, in which the application of social service theory, knowledge and  
methods to improve, restore or enhance the social and/or psychosocial functioning of individuals,  
couples, families, or groups through the provision of services excluding those of a clinical nature  
such as clinical assessment, treatment plan development, counseling or psychotherapy.  
Appropriate human services include, but are not necessarily limited to: investigation of abuse,  
crisis response, resource referral, visitation supervision, care and custody within a program or  
facility, assessment of client needs for non-clinical community programs or services;  
implementation of plans for the delivery of community services based on client needs, advocacy  
on behalf of persons or groups with unmet service needs and provision of training about  
community needs and problems.

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“Provisional licensed human services professional.” A human services professional who holds a current provisional license under this act.”

Amend Sec. 3, page 3, lines 25 and 26, by striking “, licensed social service worker or provisionally licensed social service worker” and inserting

“licensed human services professional or provisionally licensed human services professional”

Amend bill, page 3, line 30 by striking all of said line and inserting

“(a) Creation.- There is hereby created the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors, a departmental administrative board in the Department of State. The board shall consist of [13] 15 members who are citizens of the United States and who have been residents of this Commonwealth for a two-year period, two of whom shall be public members; five of whom shall be licensed social workers, at least one of whom shall be a licensed clinical social worker and at least one of whom shall be a licensed social worker; two of whom shall be licensed marriage and family therapists; two of whom shall be licensed professional counselors; one of whom shall be either a licensed marriage and family therapist or a licensed professional counselor as hereafter provided; two of whom shall be licensed human services professionals; and one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Professional and Occupational Affairs.

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“(c) Initial appointments.-Within 90 days of the effective date of this act, the Governor shall nominate one professional member to serve as a clinical social worker member of the board; three professional members to serve as professional counselor members of the board, one of whom shall serve a two-year term, one of whom shall serve a three-year term and one of whom shall serve a four-year term; two professional members to serve as the marriage and family therapist members of the board, one of whom shall serve a two-year term and one of whom shall serve a four-year term. The professional members of the board initially appointed pursuant to this subsection need not be licensed by the licensure examination adopted by the board but, at the time of appointment, must have satisfied the education and experience requirements of this act for licensure as a clinical social worker, a marriage and family therapist or a professional counselor.

(c.1) Appointments of licensed human services professionals. Within 90 days of the effective act creating the human services professionals license, the Governor shall nominate two professional members to serve as human services professionals of the board one of whom shall serve a three-year term and one of whom shall serve a four year term. The human service

professionals initially appointed to the board pursuant to this section need not be licensed by the licensure examination adopted by the board but, at the time of appointment, must have satisfied the educational and experience requirements of this act for licensure as a human services professional.

Amend bill, page 4, lines 5 and 6, by striking, "social service workers and provisional social service workers" and inserting

"human services professionals and provisional human services professionals"

Amend bill, page 4, lines 25 through 27 by striking "licensed social service workers and provisional licensed social service workers" and inserting

"licensed human services professionals and provisional licensed human services professionals"

Amend bill, page 5, lines 1 and 2, and inserting "social service workers and provisional social service workers"

"human services professionals and provisional human services professionals"

Amend bill, page 5, line 30, by striking "Social service work license" and inserting

"Human services professional license"

Amend bill, page 6, lines 1 and 2, by striking "licensed social service worker" and inserting

"licensed human services professional"

Amend bill, page 6, lines 11 through 15, by striking all of said lines and inserting

"professional for at least 3000 hours. A licensed professional is a licensed human services professional, a licensed social worker, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed psychologist, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed professional counselor or a licensed psychiatrist."

Amend bill, page 7, lines 11 through 19, by striking all of said lines and inserting

"(h) Human services professional provisional license.--An applicant shall be qualified for a provisional license to hold oneself out as a provisionally licensed human services professional, provided the applicant submits proof satisfactory to the board that:

- (1) The applicant is of good moral character.
- (2) The applicant has received a bachelor's degree or master's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in human services, behavioral science, sociology, psychology, child development, or human development.

Amend bill, page 8, lines 24 and 25 by striking all of said lines and inserting

“professional counselor, a license human services professional or a provisionally licensed human services professional”

Amend bill, page 8, line 30 and page 9, lines 1 through 11 by striking all of said lines and inserting

“(d) Human services professional.--The requirements of section 7(g)(3) shall not apply and a license shall be issued without examination to an applicant who meets one of the following requirements:

- (1) Is a licensed clinical social worker or a licensed social worker.
- (2) Is licensed in another state as a social worker or a human service professional.
- (3) Has three years' previous experience in a human services-related field and has a degree in social work or social welfare from an accredited school or program of social work as recognized by the board.

Amend bill, page 9, line 18, by striking “or social service worker” and inserting

“or human services professional”

Amend bill, page 9, lines 29 and 30, by striking “or social service worker” and inserting

“or human services professional”

Amend bill, page 10, line 6, by striking “or social service worker” and inserting

“or human services professional”

Amend bill, page 10, lines 9 through 19, by striking out all of said lines and inserting

“Section 16.4. Restrictions on use of title “Licensed Human Services Professional.”

Only individuals who have received licenses as licensed human service professionals under this act may style themselves as licensed human service professionals and use the letters “L.H.S.P.” in connection with their names, and it shall be unlawful for an individual to style himself or herself as a licensed human service professional or use any words or symbols indicating or tending to indicate that the individual is a licensed human service professional without holding a license in good standing under this act.”

Amend bill, page 10, lines 26 and 27, by striking “social service worker” and inserting

human services professional