

HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 2352

Friday, October 24, 2008
Drexel University
Paul Peck Alumni Center's Board Room
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL STURLA, Chairman
REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH PETRARCA
REPRESENTATIVE RONALD WATERS
REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM ADOLPH
REPRESENTATIVE WAYNE CRAWFORD, Minority
Committee Executive Director
REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS YEWCIC
REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER SAINATO
REPRESENTATIVE JOHN YUDICHAK
REPRESENTATIVE SEAN RAMALEY

REPORTED BY: DEBRA RICE, Court Reporter -
Notary Public

CLASS ACT REPORTING AGENCY
Registered Professional Reporters
1420 Walnut Street
Suite 1200
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 928-9760
133-H Gaither Drive
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
(856) 235-5108

1 TESTIFIERS:

2 RICHARD GELLES, Ph.D., Dean, University
3 of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy
& Practice

4 JENNA MEHNERT, MSW, Executive Director,
5 National Association of Social Workers,
Pennsylvania Chapter (NASW-PA)

6 PANEL of BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK (BSW)
7 GRADUATES: PATTI WARD, BSW and
AMY CAZALAS, BSW

8 KRISTIN NICELY COLANGELO, MSW, LSW,
9 Assistant Professor & Field Supervisor
of Social Work

10 PANEL from KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY:
11 JANICE GASKER, DSW, LCSW, Professor of
Social Work, and JOHN VAFEAS, Ph.D.,
12 LSW, Professor and Director of the
Master of Social Work

13 LINDA MAURO, DSW, Interim Dean, Temple
14 University School of Social
Administration

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1 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: I would
2 like to call this meeting of the House
3 Professional Licensure Committee to order. Today
4 we're here to talk about House Bill 2352, which
5 deals with human services professionals. First
6 on the agenda is Richard Gelles. He is the Dean
7 at the University of Pennsylvania School of
8 Social Policy & Practice. While he is coming up
9 to testify, I will get the members to introduce
10 themselves and say what county they're from.

11 REPRESENTATIVE RAMALEY: John
12 Ramaley, Beaver and Allegheny Counties.

13 REPRESENTATIVE YUDICHAK: John
14 Yudichak, Lucerne County.

15 REPRESENTATIVE SAINATO: Chris
16 Sainato, Lawrence and Beaver Counties.

17 REPRESENTATIVE YEWCIC: Tom
18 Yewcic, Somerset and Cambria Counties.

19 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: My name is
20 Bill Adolph. I'm the Republican Chair of the
21 Committee, and I'm about six miles west of Erie
22 and Delaware Counties.

23 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: I'm
24 Representative Mike Sturla from Lancaster, and
25 I'm Democratic Chair of the Professional

1 Licensure Committee.

2 Mr. Gelles?

3 MR. GELLES: Thank you,

4 Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Chair and the
5 members of the Committee for allowing me to speak
6 briefly this morning, and to my colleague and
7 graduate of the School of Social Policy &
8 Practice, Jenna Mehnert, who is the Executive
9 Director of the National Association of Social
10 Workers.

11 I am the Dean of the School of
12 Social Policy & Practice at the University of
13 Pennsylvania. We are one of the two oldest
14 social work degree programs in the United States.
15 In fact, were you to drive up Walnut Street
16 today, you would see the banners hanging that
17 celebrate our 100 years of social work education.

18 One thing about the University of
19 Pennsylvania that you need to keep in mind is
20 that we only offer the Masters of Social Work
21 degree. We have not ever offered the Bachelor of
22 Social Work degree.

23 I come to you with the following
24 experience: I have been the Dean at the
25 University of Pennsylvania for seven years. I

1 was a faculty member for three years prior to
2 that. Before that period of time, I spent 25
3 years at the University of Rhode Island. I had a
4 joint appointment in the Department of Sociology,
5 which offered the bachelor's degree in sociology
6 and a master's degree in sociology. And my
7 second appointment was in the Department of
8 Psychology, which offered three Ph.D. programs,
9 all approved by the American Psychological
10 Association, a masters of psychology and a
11 bachelors of psychology. I taught in the
12 APA-approved clinical psych program and graduated
13 five Ph.D. students during the time that I was at
14 the University of Rhode Island.

15 Really I only want to speak about
16 one issue and speak very briefly, and you can ask
17 me questions, and then you can hear from the
18 other witnesses. I currently teach graduates of
19 a number of BSW programs throughout the State of
20 Pennsylvania. We have an advanced standing
21 program that allows BSW students to come in and
22 waive one year of study; so they spend one year
23 and two months at the University of Pennsylvania
24 and then graduate alongside our two-year MSW
25 program.

1 It was a long and interesting
2 debate about whether we wanted to offer an
3 advanced standing program, and I think that comes
4 to the core of what you're going to have to
5 consider when you look at your professional
6 licensure. That was, is a BSW just another
7 undergraduate bachelor's degree, or is it
8 significantly different enough that it warrants
9 consideration?

10 From our point of view, to allow
11 that whole year to be waived from a two-year
12 master's program, and from your point of view to
13 be eligible for licensure. I'm really only going
14 to focus on that part, and my answer is simple:
15 In my now ten years' experience at Penn, gathered
16 together with my 25 years of experience teaching
17 undergraduates in other human service degree
18 programs, I've come to the conclusion that the
19 BSW program as offered from accredited schools is
20 fundamentally different from other undergraduate
21 programs.

22 My doctorate students in clinical
23 psychology, to get licensure, went to school for
24 five years and had one year in the field, and
25 then passed the test. Our BSW students have

1 about 50 percent of the clinical hours that my
2 doctorate students had after six years of study.
3 I will put our BSW students, in terms of their
4 clinical skills, up against other students who
5 have masters' degrees because of the nature of
6 the BSW program, the key being the 800 clinical
7 hours that they have doing their bachelor's
8 study. There is additional coursework that
9 prepares them to come into our program, that
10 prepares them to approach human service work from
11 a fundamentally different point of view than the
12 students I trained who are in sociology
13 bachelor's degrees, criminology bachelor's
14 degrees or psychology bachelor's degrees.

15 So, on the point of is the BSW
16 different, should it be considered different from
17 other undergraduate degrees, my answer is
18 unequivocally yes. That's really all I have to
19 say. If you would like to ask me questions, I
20 would be happy to answer them, or you can move on
21 with your agenda.

22 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Questions
23 from members?

24 Just one question I have about the
25 800 hours of clinical work: Can you describe to

1 us what that is? I mean, for me, I have a degree
2 in architecture; so 800 hours of clinical work,
3 does that mean that the person is in a hospital
4 somewhere, or does it mean they're --

5 MR. GELLES: They're in a variety
6 of human service settings; so the clinical work
7 can range from the neonatal unit at CHOP, to a
8 contact agency, to the Department of Human
9 Services that does services for children in their
10 own homes. It can be in schools, working
11 side-by-side with school social workers. It can
12 be an agency that serves an elderly population.
13 It can be with people who are making a transition
14 from welfare to work.

15 It is clearly not classroom time.
16 It is outside. They are supervised by clinical
17 instructors. So it's a field experience, not an
18 internship, and it's fundamentally linked to what
19 they do when they come back and take their
20 additional social work classes back in their
21 bachelor's program. So it is out in the
22 community, and it's a lot of hours. In my school
23 alone, our students put a quarter of a million
24 hours of human service work into the greater
25 Philadelphia area each year, uncompensated, and

1 the range of what they do is enormously
2 extensive.

3 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Okay,
4 thank you.

5 MR. GELLES: Thanks very much.

6 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Next on
7 the agenda is Jenna Mehnert, who is a Master of
8 Social Work and Executive Director of the
9 National Association of Social Workers,
10 Pennsylvania Chapter.

11 MS. MEHNERT: And the giver of the
12 books, which we will walk through today. My name
13 is Jenna Mehnert, and I am the Executive Director
14 of the National Association of Social Workers.

15 Chairman Sturla, Chairman Adolph,
16 members of the House Professional Licensure
17 Committee and key staff, I want to thank you all
18 for taking time to talk about the issue of
19 bachelor level human services licensure.

20 There are two key issues that I
21 hope to leave you with today, and hopefully the
22 others are to leave with you as well. A few of
23 the students have to go back with him to class.
24 He's supposed to be teaching.

25 I want to make sure that we all

1 leave here today believing that the licensure of
2 direct practice human services professionals is
3 critical for public protection. It's not about
4 (inaudible) for social workers. We are about
5 people, and this is about public protection, and
6 I want to make sure that we leave with that
7 perception. Also, the competency for this work
8 force, the direct practice human services work
9 force, should be defined and related to the
10 nature of the academic training, which is what
11 Dean Gelles was touching on.

12 We've talked about, and we'll get
13 to the concept of, creating an inclusive license,
14 but having that inclusive license recognize the
15 difference for someone who has gone to school
16 only to do direct practice human services versus
17 those who have gone to school for a degree in
18 things that are related but not necessarily
19 directly focused.

20 If you look across our society,
21 there are many fields that touch upon people's
22 lives at critical times of need. Most
23 professions are regulated with appropriate
24 accountability ensuring public protection. As
25 members of this Committee more than any other,

1 you all know that we ensure competency and
2 provide accountability for nail technicians, hair
3 dressers, massage therapists and even the car
4 salesman and car dealer, to make sure that a
5 person is licensed. Yet the critical work force
6 for which we do not ensure basic competency and
7 public accountability, that workforce is direct
8 practice human service workers. Child welfare,
9 adult protective services, residential treatment,
10 rape crisis, domestic violence, they have no
11 basic competency requirements, and there's no
12 avenue for public accountability.

13 And here comes my book, ready?
14 Under Tab 2, you'll see some examples -- and the
15 first picture is rather gruesome; so I'm warning
16 you before you open it -- of how the public has
17 been harmed because of the lack of having a
18 license for the direct practice workforce. While
19 it's hard to look at this first picture -- it's
20 the autopsy photo of Danieal Kelly -- Danieal
21 Kelly was a 14-year-old girl with special needs
22 in Philadelphia who died under the care of DHS as
23 a result of her mother's neglect. The point
24 person for this young girl was an individual who
25 had an art major degree and was in no way

1 licensed, while the caseworker time and time
2 again was notified by the public that there was a
3 need for action. There was nowhere else for the
4 public to take that concern. Had he been a
5 hairdresser, someone could have gone to the
6 licensing board and raised some concerns, but
7 because there is no direct practice license in
8 Pennsylvania, there was nowhere other than DHS to
9 take concerns about his performance.

10 So, if someone functions below
11 competency, there's just a board that can
12 investigate those. So the folks who are dealing
13 with our most vulnerable citizens are not
14 required to meet the basic competency, and there
15 is no external accountability for those
16 individuals. Licensure, as we all know, is about
17 public protection. To that end, looking at the
18 body of Danieal Kelly, I cannot think of a group
19 that requires more public protection than the
20 clients receiving basic services from the
21 workforces of direct practice, child welfare,
22 adult protection services, rape crisis,
23 home-based treatment.

24 Hopefully, you will all agree with
25 me that as we move to ensure appropriate

1 competency and create public accountability,
2 creating a license for this workforce is a
3 critical step we must take. It has been
4 suggested that perhaps a certificate is a more
5 appropriate approach than licensure. You will
6 see under Tab 3 the part with the Child
7 Protective Services Law that creates the
8 certificate that in fact all public child welfare
9 employees must hold. The point I want to
10 establish is that you have 18 months to earn that
11 certificate, and average burnout rates under the
12 General Accounting Office is two years for a
13 child welfare worker. So you can be functioning
14 for 18 months without that certificate, and then
15 two years is the average length in stay. But
16 also important is that level of certificate does
17 not create public accountability. There's no
18 board to call to say, "Hey, this person is
19 behaving unethically or inappropriately or not
20 addressing this matter."

21 The other point under Tab 3 that I
22 want to draw your attention to is the basic civil
23 service requirement to work in frontline
24 casework. You'll notice that if you look at the
25 second page of it under "Job Requirements," it

1 will talk about what is the minimal standard to
2 be hired in casework, and I consider this to be
3 incredibly challenging work. Having worked with
4 the Mayor of New York City, the Mayor in D.C. and
5 Governor Rendell's administration, I'll tell you
6 that there's nothing more complicated than
7 investigating child abuse. The minimum standard
8 is just 12 college credits, and that's what civil
9 service requires to get this job. So you'll see
10 that the certificate you have 18 months to earn,
11 and you're only required not to have a college
12 degree but to have 12 credits in a related social
13 science.

14 If we hope to create a
15 professional workforce for our most vulnerable
16 clients, we need to ensure that those workers
17 meet accountable and appropriate professional
18 standards, and that professional standard is
19 licensure.

20 Hoping you all now believe that
21 licensure is critical, the question remains what
22 individuals are best situated to provide
23 frontline human services. In all fairness,
24 clearly it depends on personal commitment and a
25 sense of integrity for each individual. I have

1 read a lot of surveys in trying to figure out
2 what is that key, and, of course, the personal
3 commitment is the key. While there is no magic
4 answer for human services or any field,
5 conventional wisdom says that the individuals who
6 are most directly prepared for a job will perform
7 that job the best. When it comes to delivery of
8 frontline human services, a bachelor's degree in
9 social work is the program that is most
10 specifically tailored.

11 If you look under Tab 4, you'll
12 see a little summary of the difference, and then
13 you'll see a comparison chart of the course
14 titles that are required for a bachelor's degree
15 in social work, that's the BSW, versus a
16 psychology degree. And you can turn through and
17 see course descriptions matched up, and at the
18 very end of Tab 4, you'll see a chart that was
19 actually prepared in another state, but it's
20 based on academic programs around the country,
21 comparing social work major, sociology major,
22 psychology major and criminal justice major.

23 A bachelor's degree in social work
24 is all about the delivery of frontline human
25 services, while bachelor's degrees in other

1 related social sciences are not as narrowly
2 structured to prepare people solely for the
3 delivery of frontline human services.

4 There are a few important points I
5 also want to make sure I draw your attention to.
6 The most important, and this might sound a little
7 odd, but if you look at the difference under Tab
8 5, which means how the National Association of
9 Social Workers refers to bachelor level
10 professionals and how the American Counseling
11 Association refers to bachelor level folks, we
12 consider a BSW to be part of the social work
13 ladder of services, while other professional
14 associations consider bachelor level folks to be
15 paraprofessionals.

16 To offer a BSW degree, the program
17 must be accredited by the Council on Social Work
18 Education. Accreditation by CSWE is a
19 complicated and lengthy process, which you'll
20 hear about from some of the other testifiers.
21 There is no accreditation process for other
22 social science majors.

23 Professionals follow a code of
24 ethics. BSW students are taught and expected to
25 adhere to a social work professional Code of

1 Ethics. As they complete their field experience
2 working directly with clients in frontline human
3 services, BSWs are taught to connect the
4 theoretical with real life practice in a way that
5 develops them into professionals. Understanding
6 the theories taught within the disciplines of
7 psychology, sociology and human services, the
8 combined practical experience and focused
9 coursework, BSWs learn what it means to
10 effectively work with people.

11 Under Tab 6, you will find a list
12 of other states that offer bachelor level
13 licensure, and you will see that several states
14 have structured their license in the way that it
15 was proposed by Representative Mundy in House
16 Bill 2352. House Bill 2352 states that a BSW
17 graduate would be eligible for license upon
18 completing his or her degree and passing the
19 nationally administered exam. House Bill 2352
20 proposes that other degrees are permitted to be
21 licensed, but only after they have gained
22 additional experience, which is one of the points
23 of contention that they're working on, the need
24 to have a difference between someone who has a
25 BSW and someone who has a related social service

1 degree.

2 Our goal is to create an inclusive
3 license that allows as many people as possible to
4 be licensed, but recognize in the creation of
5 that licensure, through the requirement of
6 additional hours of experience, the difference
7 between a BSW and a BA in psychology, sociology
8 and human development. We want to make sure that
9 those folks can also be licensed, but be licensed
10 with the requirement of additional experience.

11 I hope that I have touched upon
12 why licensure is important and also given you a
13 little bit of an idea about the difference
14 between a BSW degree versus a related degree in
15 other social sciences.

16 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Thank you.
17 Questions from members?

18 I have one question: Because of
19 the changes we made -- I know we discussed this
20 -- there was concern from some people about only
21 being able to be a human services professional if
22 you had a BSW, and I think you pointed out that
23 that has been changed a little bit. Can you
24 perhaps explain who else might be able to become
25 a licensed human services professional?

1 MS. MEHNERT: Sure. Marlene on
2 your staff has been coordinating meetings with
3 the Professional Council Association of American
4 Family Therapists, and they have expressed
5 concerns, and you have their written testimony,
6 that they don't support the differentiation
7 between a BSW and someone with a BA in say
8 psychology or sociology. They think everyone
9 should be licensed the same and together.

10 Our perspective is that you have
11 the BSW degree, as Dean Gelles said and other
12 folks will say; it's a nationally accredited
13 program that, to be honest, doesn't allow for
14 very much academic freedom, because it's seen as
15 training for direct practice human services work,
16 so that that degree should be given preference,
17 not exclusion but preference, in earning a direct
18 practice human services license.

19 So we tried to address any
20 concerns we could in terms of making sure that
21 all appropriately licensed folks could supervise,
22 but that is the current disagreement right now,
23 to be very honest, between the social work
24 community and other folks. They're not as
25 important, as you remember from the last hearing,

1 about the need for licensure as we are, and we're
2 very strong about the need for licensure. We
3 also do believe that there should be some
4 differentiation of (inaudible) had the narrow
5 focus on the study of BSW. Those programs are
6 accredited; so they meet national standards.

7 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Just for
8 the record, I mean, I had somebody who opposes
9 this legislation say to me, "Well, you know, you
10 might have somebody who went and got a fine arts
11 degree in weaving that's now working as a social
12 worker, and they might actually be okay. Why
13 would you want to exclude them from the
14 workforce?" Would you care to respond to that?

15 MS. MEHNERT: Sure. First of all
16 -- and we had this conversation a lot at the last
17 hearing -- we're not looking to mandate this
18 license, and there have been other folks that say
19 we should be. We're not looking to mandate the
20 license that you can't work for Beaver County
21 children. We're not looking to do that. What
22 we're looking to do is give employers the ability
23 to choose and counties the ability to choose.
24 And (inaudible) testified at the last hearing
25 that said, "If this license is created, they

1 could choose to hire people who met the licensure
2 standard." Other employers could say, "Hey, this
3 person is great. We know they're great. We
4 really like them. They've done a wonderful job.
5 We're going to hire them, even though they cannot
6 been licensed."

7 We're looking to create the
8 ability for employers to add this additional
9 layer of protection for the clients that they
10 serve. We're not looking to create a mandate
11 across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. So this
12 legislation, if passed as it is drafted now,
13 would not prevent anyone from being able to work
14 in social science. It would empower employers
15 and communities to say, "Hey, there is an answer
16 for things like Danieal Kelly. There's a way we
17 can prevent that. Let's try to have people be
18 licensed so there is that public accountability
19 and that people have met a higher competency
20 level." So it creates an opportunity without
21 taking away anybody's ability to be employed.

22 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Thank you.
23 Representative Adolph?

24 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman. Just looking out and seeing who is

1 behind you, is this field dominated by females?

2 MS. MEHNERT: The social work
3 profession is about 80 percent female and 20
4 percent male.

5 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Eighty
6 percent?

7 MS. MEHNERT: Yes, it is.

8 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Any other
10 questions? All right, next on the agenda is the
11 Panel of Social Work Graduates, Patti Ward and
12 Amy Cazalas. While they are coming up, I will
13 also point out that we have a letter of testimony
14 submitted for the record by the Pennsylvania
15 Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and
16 the Pennsylvania Counseling Association. We
17 submitted those for the record. And we have also
18 been joined by Representative Petrarca and
19 Representative Waters. You can begin.

20 MS. CAZALAS: Good morning,
21 Chairman Sturla, Chairman Adolph, committee
22 members and staff. Thank you for the opportunity
23 to testify on House Bill 2352, a bill that I
24 truly believe is essential and important. My
25 name is Amy Cazalas, and I'm currently pursuing

1 my Masters of Social Work degree from
2 Shippensburg University. I also recently
3 graduated from Shippensburg with a Bachelor's of
4 Social Work this past May.

5 Experience has taught me that the
6 BSW degree is the strongest bachelor's level of
7 human service degree that one could achieve.
8 Through my undergraduate work during my senior
9 year, the BSW requires a field placement. These
10 field placements allow students to learn, adapt
11 and grow from real life practice experience.
12 Though it's a rigorous workload having one
13 seminar class and four full days' worth of
14 internship, it gives students the opportunity to
15 integrate four years of learning into practical
16 experiences. Through the efforts of high
17 supervision, this accumulates into 450 total
18 hours of practice, putting forth skills from the
19 generalist model to more advanced techniques.
20 Students in the field practicum are well prepared
21 for social work practice to better address the
22 needs of individuals, families and communities
23 alike.

24 The BSW degree is also the only
25 bachelor's level human service degree whose

1 educational programs are accredited by a national
2 lobby, which is the Council on Social Work
3 Education. The CSWE accreditation process
4 ensures that the programs meet national standards
5 on all levels. Through this process, social work
6 students receive appropriate education and
7 training to better serve our clients. My
8 coursework was much more focused on working as a
9 professional than any of my friends while in
10 college. I had less flexibility in my courses,
11 and I was being educated to work in frontline
12 human services. I graduated from my bachelor's
13 program a BSW-level professional, and to say that
14 my degree should not be recognized as the
15 preferred degree in the delivery of direct
16 practice services is simply unreasonable.

17 Bachelor's level licensure speaks
18 to our professionalism and ensures a level of
19 competency that is needed to work with such
20 vulnerable populations. To ask those with
21 related degrees to obtain an additional amount of
22 experience is not judgmental; it is simply about
23 protecting the public. My program was nationally
24 accredited with dictated courses that I had to
25 take, and my professional Code of Ethics governs

1 my behavior as a professional. What Code of
2 Ethics is a BA in psychology following? They
3 cannot join the American Psychological
4 Association or the American Counseling
5 Association as full members, because they are
6 seen as "paraprofessionals" by their own
7 associations. I am a full member recognized as a
8 professional within my association.

9 In social work, we work with
10 clients who are at risk and exposed to a wide
11 range of environments that influence the
12 decisions that are made. Some of the decisions
13 they make may not be the best. In any case, we
14 are provided with the skills and knowledge
15 necessary to endeavor any task to promote
16 assistance to our clients. Our jobs are not to
17 "fix" our clients' problems, but to provide
18 support and opportunities for individuals to meet
19 their own needs and promote an improved quality
20 of life.

21 I ask you to support bachelor's
22 level licensure for human service professionals
23 so that our clients receive the most effective
24 services from well-educated and skilled
25 professionals. Thank you.

1 MS. WARD: Good morning, members
2 of the House Professional Licensure Committee and
3 staff. My name is Patti Ward. I'm a single
4 mother and a part-time graduate student attending
5 Widener University, where I will graduate with my
6 master's degree in social work in 2009. Since I
7 realize that several of you attended the previous
8 Committee meeting in Pittsburgh, you may remember
9 that at age 15, I was removed from my home after
10 I revealed "daddy's little secret." I was placed
11 in group and foster homes until I reached the age
12 of 18, when I was released into the real world.
13 Without the stable foundation most children are
14 provided while preparing to enter into adulthood
15 well-grounded, I was lost. I spent many years
16 making bad decisions, burning bridges, going
17 nowhere with my life, until the day my life
18 caught up with me.

19 Years of attending group and
20 individual therapy sessions opened my eyes to the
21 wonders of the real world and my place in it. I
22 had no control over my upbringing, but I most
23 certainly have control over my life now. It was
24 at this time that I decided where I wanted to go
25 with my life. Through education, I reclaimed my

1 life, and now I wanted to help other survivors of
2 incest reclaim theirs. At age 31, in addition to
3 working full-time, I began to attend classes at
4 Harrisburg Area Community College. Four years
5 later, I was not only working full-time,
6 attending college part-time, I became a single
7 mother. In order to survive, remain employed,
8 complete college and raise my daughter, I had to
9 seek outside services, welfare, food stamps, WIC,
10 Section 8 Housing, Unemployment, child care
11 assistance and medical access, among others.

12 At the time, I was working as a
13 case manager with clients who were also seeking
14 services. It infuriated me to see the manner in
15 which my clients were treated, as less-than-
16 important, expendable burdens that appeared to
17 waste the worker's time. I advised my clients to
18 be the better, bigger person and let the attitude
19 of the workers just roll off their backs and just
20 do what needed to be done to receive the services
21 they needed and deserved, regardless of the
22 behaviors of the worker. I believed that was the
23 best way to handle it, until I became the client.
24 I was made to feel just as less-than-important
25 and expendable as my clients were. More

1 importantly, I was made to feel. What an
2 eye-opening experience it was to literally feel
3 what I was asking my clients to ignore and put up
4 with.

5 It became very clear to me why
6 obtaining my bachelor's degree in social work was
7 so important. We, my clients and I, were people
8 experiencing crisis. We needed help, not the
9 judgmental attitude that we were receiving from
10 frontline providers. I took a second look at my
11 social work education and realized that this was
12 what it's all about, people respectfully helping
13 people. Had those frontline service providers
14 invested in a social work education, they would
15 have learned how to speak to people in crisis
16 with empathy, not sympathy, with compassion and
17 understanding, not judgment and criticism.

18 My education prepared me to face
19 the varied difficult challenges that life throws
20 at us with courage, conviction and the mentality
21 necessary to focus on what is needed to survive,
22 while still validating the feelings that
23 accompany crisis situations. The courses I
24 attended were designed to teach me to empower and
25 assist rather than judge and belittle our

1 vulnerable population.

2 I cannot effectively articulate
3 how destructive the influence of those who were
4 to help me was at times. This is why I firmly
5 believe that if we want direct service frontline
6 work to make a real difference in the lives of
7 our clients, those services must be delivered by
8 trained, educated professionals who are
9 recognized as such.

10 My life experiences have made me
11 stronger. I use my voice to stand up for what is
12 right and to advocate for change, as well as
13 encourage my clients to do the same. I strive to
14 understand, to make things better and to empower
15 others to stand up for themselves. I no longer
16 hide out of fear, but I rise to the challenge.
17 The values learned and the Code of Ethics I as a
18 social worker follow have provided me with the
19 skills I needed to become the capable social
20 worker I am today. For the most part, the
21 majority of direct social workers have a
22 bachelor's level license education at this time.
23 Thank you for taking the time to
24 listen to my story. I understand the competing
25 interests you must evaluate when making

1 decisions, and I hope that my story will stay
2 with you as you debate why it is critical to
3 professionalize the work force of our social
4 service system.

5 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Thank you.
6 Questions from members?

7 Just to clarify some points, you
8 aren't suggesting that simply the fact that you
9 have a bachelor of social work should entitle you
10 to licensure; you still have to pass a test and
11 do some things in addition to just having the
12 degree, correct?

13 MS. WARD: Correct.

14 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: So it's
15 not just a by-right type of issue?

16 MS. CAZALAS: No. I mean, you
17 still have to take the exam, and then you still,
18 of course, have to have the degree and then show
19 your competency through the exam.

20 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Okay,
21 thank you.

22 Next on the agenda is Kristin
23 Nicely Colangelo, Assistant Professor and Field
24 Supervisor of Social Work at Cabrini College.

25 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Good

1 morning; my name is Kristin Nicely Colangelo, and
2 don't worry, everybody skips over that name;
3 Kristin is fine. I want to thank the Chairs and
4 the members of the Committee for having me here
5 today. I would like to thank my Executive
6 Director Jenna for inviting me to speak.

7 As I sat in my chair, I thought,
8 wow, I have to sit down and practice my speech,
9 and all of a sudden all this emotion came up
10 about the importance of what we're talking about
11 today. And I'm a little overwhelmed by the power
12 of the social work profession and working with
13 these clients that are protected by our training.
14 As somebody who has gone through the BSW and MSW
15 programs and now has the honor to teach future
16 social workers, I would like today to talk about,
17 one, what it's like to be in the classroom and
18 what it's like to actually teach and be the
19 supervisor of the students when they're in the
20 field, but also talk a little bit about the
21 council, our Council of Social Work Educators and
22 how powerful, strict and rigorous that process
23 is.

24 I've been through one process and
25 am in the middle in my school, Cabrini College,

1 which is in Lancaster, of going through another
2 re-accreditation process. So, again, my name is
3 Kristin Nicely Colangelo. I'm a very proud
4 graduate of Temple University's BSW and MSW
5 programs, and I'm so happy that my dean is also
6 in this room. I'm also an assistant professor at
7 Cabrini College in the School of Social Work, and
8 I'm so honored to be here today to talk about
9 this licensure question that you guys are facing.

10 I want to tell you that my
11 students when they first come to me in BSW,
12 they're also pretty unclear about what this
13 means, and I give them an assignment that says,
14 "I want you to write a mini paper about what the
15 world would look like that did not need social
16 workers." And I tell you, the responses are
17 pretty interesting. One of them is "This is the
18 stupidest assignment I've ever written," but one
19 of them is that they write to me about what the
20 world would look like as if social workers just
21 disappeared, that there would be chaos, that
22 people would still be sick, people would still be
23 addicted, that people would still be facing the
24 issues that they were facing. So what I try to
25 emphasize with them is what is the world if it

1 didn't need this special profession, not what it
2 would like without it if it disappeared, because
3 that's one thing that is never going to happen.
4 And one of the things that I talk to them about
5 is other professions can very successfully handle
6 these types of situations. What is it that makes
7 our profession different? And I think that's the
8 question that's up in front of the Committee
9 today.

10 Why do we take two semesters of
11 social welfare policy and social research? Why
12 do we take two semesters of human behavior in the
13 social work environment when we also take
14 psychology classes? Why are we trained in
15 critical analysis, assessment, not diagnosis,
16 solidarity and not charity? And the answer is
17 because our clients, whom Jenna spoke about very
18 powerfully, are living in a society and a social
19 environment that results in a need for these
20 skills on all levels, and that psychology and
21 sociology and other disciplines do prepare their
22 grads to work in the same way, but it's not with
23 the same skills, training and experience that our
24 graduates actually graduate with.

25 I just want to tell you a story

1 about a recent graduate I had a discussion with,
2 about her own struggle, about what makes me
3 different, how am I different from my colleagues
4 in this agency. And we started to talk about one
5 of her cases she was struggling with. She had a
6 young man who was in the North Philadelphia
7 School District, and this young man was
8 struggling with behavioral problems, as well as
9 depression and ADD. And on his caseload, he did
10 have a psychologist that worked with him, and
11 through his medication and working with his
12 mental health issues, one of the things that was
13 coming up with his behavioral problems was
14 truancy. He was not being able to get to school,
15 and this was attributed to his mental health
16 issues. So they said, okay, truancy, you go
17 through a truancy program; that fixes it; cool.

18 So he was referred then to our
19 social worker, and a process began when she
20 started to do her assessment. She started to
21 talk to him about his family, his family
22 composition, his environment from which he was
23 coming, his community, what was going on
24 economically in his family, how he was adjusting
25 to these programs and his true feelings about the

1 medications that he was on. And these were
2 questions that he had never been asked before.

3 It came out that his mother had
4 lost her job, that there were no more jobs
5 available in her community; so they lost their
6 home and moved in with an aunt in South
7 Philadelphia. So now he's living in South
8 Philadelphia, but he's still in school in North
9 Philadelphia, and some of the fears he's facing
10 about going through a formal transfer is the
11 system finding out that they're homeless and the
12 fear of being removed. So they kept it quiet.

13 He is now going back and forth
14 between South Philadelphia and North Philadelphia
15 and sometimes not able to afford it, and this was
16 never spoken about. It wasn't in his case file.
17 Nobody knew what he was struggling with
18 financially until the social worker with the
19 critical analysis, the ability to talk about the
20 social welfare climate he was living in, the
21 economic, the social justice issues. She was
22 able to really find out what this person was like
23 in their entire environment, and that made such a
24 difference in this person's life.

25 This person started to shed some

1 of his self-hatred, feeling that he was a loser,
2 that it was all his fault and feeling that he was
3 just fundamentally broken, and he started to
4 really see that there were things in the
5 environment as well as internally that he could
6 start to have some control over. He started
7 coming to all his meetings. If he wasn't able to
8 make a meeting, he actually would call and say,
9 "I can't make it." He built a trusting
10 relationship with his social worker in a way that
11 was different. He had trusting relationships
12 with other people on his case, but it was a
13 different kind of relationship that looked at him
14 as someone in his environment. And that was what
15 we talked about, what made her different in her
16 agency. And in talking about this for the client
17 also, she was able to get him to a place where he
18 was more empowered and more active in his
19 behavioral treatment.

20 When you're talking about the
21 difference between psychology majors and
22 sociology majors, all very, very important,
23 psychology majors in universities are very
24 thoroughly educated in science retention and
25 behavior, and sociology majors are very

1 thoroughly educated in the scientific analysis of
2 social theory and social problems in society.

3 But with social work, we take this very powerful
4 knowledge, and we couple it with knowledge and
5 skills of working in solidarity with clients.

6 How do you work with a client? That is something
7 that we have four and five semesters on, every
8 single course about raising the human condition,
9 fighting for social and economic justice and
10 really tearing apart what all those terms even
11 mean.

12 What is "social justice"? We have
13 a whole month on what is social and economic
14 justice. What does it mean to "empower"? I had
15 a professor at Temple who told us that we weren't
16 allowed to use the term "empowerment" until she
17 deemed us to understand what it was, and she was
18 serious, that empowerment was not charity. It
19 was not saving. It was not fixing. It was
20 understanding that we are each other. We are the
21 same. And that was something in the social work
22 profession that's really important.

23 Our core curriculum is something I
24 want to talk about a little bit, and really get
25 into kind of the differences. We have

1 requirements to develop critical analysis so that
2 our social workers, when sitting in partnership
3 with the students, are able to critically analyze
4 this environment, to look at our social service
5 agencies and our social service welfare and be
6 able to look for gaps into which all too many of
7 our clients fall, and to be able to work toward a
8 just society where our clients don't only survive
9 every day, but they're actually able to thrive in
10 that society. We work around empathy and talk
11 about the difference between empathy and
12 sympathy. We talk about engagement and the
13 difference between assessing and diagnosing, and
14 we talk about human dignity and self-
15 determination.

16 But most importantly -- and our
17 dean from Penn talked about this, and I want to
18 talk about it a little bit more -- is the field
19 experience piece that social work has that makes
20 it a professional degree. We have hundreds of
21 hours, averaging between 600 to 800 hours, in the
22 field, and as was said, this is not an
23 internship. It's an actual field placement,
24 where you are acting as a professional social
25 worker. You work under the supervision of other

1 practicing social workers. You get clinical
2 supervision every single week where you sit down
3 and you open case files and you talk about what
4 you did, what you said, how you intervened. You
5 talk about client relationships, navigating the
6 social service system, advocacy, role playing.
7 You talk about interviewing skills. This didn't
8 work. This worked. How do I do this? How do I
9 do that? And also talking about the current
10 social policy system in which we're trying to
11 give these services.

12 And the power of this is that
13 every component of this education is scrutinized
14 by our council. We are a professional degree;
15 therefore we as social worker educators have to
16 answer to a council that keeps us accountable.
17 So, then going out in the field, that's why we
18 see it's so important within our professionals to
19 also have something where they can be just as
20 accountable. This social work council looks at
21 every aspect of our education.

22 And right now I'm going through a
23 process, and I can tell you; I can attest to how
24 strict and rigorous this process is. They look
25 at every aspect of our program, our mission, our

1 goals, every learning objective we have on every
2 single syllabi to make sure it directly relates
3 to that mission. We have intensive narrative
4 components we have to write that are binders,
5 just huge binders, about everything that we do.
6 And they don't get stuck on a shelf somewhere;
7 they go through them with a red pen.

8 Every single thing that we do is
9 scrutinized in training these professionals.
10 They do interviews with students and faculty and
11 administrators, field instructors, how we pick
12 our field instructors, how we evaluate them. So
13 it really is a powerful process that no other
14 helping professional degree has to go through.
15 They don't go through this kind of scrutiny to
16 make sure that when we stand up and get our BSW,
17 we're able to say, "This is what we did."

18 When agencies choose to say they
19 want a BSW, it's because of this; it's because of
20 this training. It's because of this scrutiny and
21 experience that our BSWs are able to go out into
22 the world and say, "I have 800 hours. I have an
23 evaluation process reporting, all these analysis
24 papers that I've done, research." We research
25 projects on our client population, and when we go

1 out as BSWs, the agencies know this, and that is
2 why they specify.

3 And the added power of a licensure
4 board to be able to protect that BSW graduate is
5 that not only do they have the front-end
6 training, they now have the professional
7 accountability, which Jenna talked about a lot.
8 If someone were able to call and say, "I don't
9 like what's going on," they're not living up to
10 our code; they're not living up to our mission,
11 and somebody needs to do something about it. And
12 when you're working with human clients, there's
13 nothing more powerful than that, to have someone
14 to call up. We can call up our teachers. We can
15 call up our school board and say, "I don't like
16 what's going on in my son's class." But who do
17 the most oppressed people get to call when it
18 comes to our biggest force of BSWs? There's
19 nobody right now. I mean, employers, but not a
20 licensure board.

21 Upon graduation, our students are
22 really clear about what makes them different,
23 about the distinction of our field and our
24 education. And I hope that today some of the
25 unclarity and confusion about that would be

1 able to be cleared up for the members of the
2 Committee on the real power behind our education
3 that sets us ahead and to think about the power
4 that would just be added to that by giving BSW
5 licensure. And we have MSW licensure in this
6 state. Believe me, that's a very powerful thing,
7 when people can call up that board and say, "This
8 is not right. I feel like my rights have been
9 violated." To give that also to the BSWs, who
10 are the frontline workers in many of these
11 agencies, that same protection, but most
12 importantly our clients -- let me repeat that
13 -- most importantly that our clients have
14 protection, because right now sometimes that's
15 not what is true.

16 Thank you very much. I know I
17 covered the education and the counsel side; so,
18 if you have any questions, I would be happy to
19 answer them.

20 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Questions
21 from members?

22 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you,
23 Chairman Sturla. I will disclose that Cabrini
24 College is in my legislative district. But how
25 many people do you think are out there working as

1 social workers that in your opinion really should
2 not be?

3 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Well, I
4 know in my school, we always have students where
5 you have that feeling, right, where you're like,
6 whoa, maybe not the best degree for this person,
7 but what happens in that process is that there's
8 an exit interview that they have to go through
9 before they actually graduate where exactly what
10 you're talking about is discussed: "I'm worried
11 about that you're going to go forward." "I'm
12 worried that maybe there are certain things that
13 you haven't grappled with enough." But I think,
14 as with every profession, you have levels of
15 competency, and, of course, in the social work
16 profession, you have the same. And a licensure
17 board would help with that, because you would
18 have to go through -- and I'm not sure exactly
19 how it went; with MSWs, some of the licenses, you
20 have to actually have hours that you go through.
21 You would have to sit for an exam, maybe an
22 interview, and then that could also be talked
23 about when you see somebody who is not quite up
24 to the level we want them to be.

25 So, when we graduate somebody, we

1 have very specific things that they look at. Did
2 you pass this class? Did you pass that class?
3 Did you do these certain things? But a license
4 board can take it another step further to do
5 that.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Kristin,
7 what I'm trying to get at is that obviously if
8 you graduate with your degree, the educational
9 background is there --

10 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Absolutely.

11 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: -- but
12 what I was trying to get to is -- I probably
13 should have asked this question previously --
14 other folks have graduated with other degrees and
15 called themselves social workers, and out there
16 in the world, how many are there -- I mean, if
17 we take a group of Philadelphia people that work
18 for Philadelphia County, for example, or the
19 Department of Welfare, if there's 100 people that
20 call themselves social workers, what is the
21 percentage of those 100 people that have the
22 degree that we're talking about here today?

23 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Do you mind
24 if I turn to my Executive Director on that one,
25 because she definitely analyzes the work force

1 more in depth than I do.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Yes.

3 MS. MEHNERT: Well, first I would
4 say no one can call themselves a social worker
5 after September 8th if they don't hold a social
6 work degree, but I'm not saying that they don't.
7 Our experience has been that while there are 29
8 accredited BSW programs and 11 accredited MSW
9 programs, the vast majority -- only about a
10 third of child welfare in the Commonwealth of
11 Pennsylvania are folks who actually have social
12 work degrees, because you can have an accounting
13 degree, an art history degree. So our experience
14 would be that probably about 70 percent of this
15 work force are not folks who have social work
16 training, even though actually we're one of the
17 states with the largest number of social work
18 programs, with the total of 40 accredited
19 programs.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: That's
21 what I was getting at, Jenna, thank you.

22 MS. MEHNERT: I always look at it
23 from the practical perspective of we're paying
24 for folks, and we're not necessarily paying for
25 folks who are trained to do what they're doing.

1 REPRESENTATIVE ADOLPH: Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA:

3 Representative Petrarca?

4 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chairman. You said that the MSWs are
6 licensed in Pennsylvania?

7 MS. MEHNERT: Yes.

8 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: My
9 question is about continuing education. Are they
10 required to do continuing education?

11 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Yes,
12 absolutely.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: What is
14 that per year? Do you know what those hours are?

15 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: I am a LSW
16 in Pennsylvania, and we have, I believe, 32 hours
17 that we have to do, and then there's also on top
18 of that required hours of ethics. So every year
19 we have to renew our license, we have to get this
20 continuing education, which we can get through
21 NASW. They provide a wide variety of continuing
22 education courses that we can do, and we have to
23 actually show that they are approved by the
24 council and by the NASW. So you can't just go
25 and do any kind of continuing education. It's

1 actually approved up front to meet very specific
2 requirements.

3 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: If this
4 legislation passes, what are your opinions on
5 continuing education, different, more, the same?

6 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: My opinion
7 on continuing education is that it is extremely
8 powerful and absolutely necessary. When you get
9 your license, when you get out of your BSW
10 program, if you do it traditionally, you're in
11 your early 20s, and you practice then until
12 whenever. So the continuing education is
13 extremely powerful and extremely necessary, I
14 think, for the BSW.

15 I'm not sure in other states -- I
16 know New Jersey used to have a BSW. I think it
17 was a little bit less, and I'm not sure if that
18 was because of the BSW and MSW, but I would think
19 that it would be proportionate to the BSW, maybe,
20 I think, a third less.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: So right
22 now the people that don't have MSWs, they're
23 basically getting no continuing education --

24 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Right.

25 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: -- and,

1 as you say, they could have been out of school
2 for decades with no additional training?

3 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: If you have
4 an MSW and you do not have a license, you are
5 practicing as an MSW without a license, there is
6 not a requirement.

7 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank
8 you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Two things
10 I want to just follow up on something that Jenna
11 said: I now have to get my letterhead changed.
12 I can't call myself a social worker anymore. I
13 can still be an interior designer, an
14 electrician, a plumber, a train operator, all
15 those things, but --

16 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: There's
17 lots of schools in the room, though. I can talk
18 to you about Cabrini.

19 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: But that,
20 I think, goes to that issue of the professional
21 licensure not just being something that's a way
22 to make people jump through hoops or those kinds
23 of things. It's to actually establish that the
24 person has some qualifications that distinguishes
25 themselves from other people, and I think that's

1 what we're looking at here.

2 I want to play devil's advocate
3 here for a second, and I'll put the disclaimer in
4 that I don't believe a word I'm going to say as
5 the devil's advocate. But when you said you have
6 your students write a paper that says what would
7 the world look like if there was no need for
8 social workers, I imagine that there are people
9 in the legislature that will say --

10 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: We're
11 there?

12 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Yes; why
13 can't we be there? If we allow you to have a
14 license as a social worker, we're just ingraining
15 in society the fact that we have a welfare state
16 and that we need you there to perpetuate that
17 welfare state, and how dare you do this. If you
18 just didn't do any of this stuff, people wouldn't
19 act that way. Can you address that issue?

20 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Wow,
21 absolutely.

22 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Because
23 there are colleagues that believe that; so I'll
24 put you on warning.

25 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: What I find

1 very interesting about social work is that it is
2 one of the most misunderstood professions, I
3 believe. I have years of experience doing
4 political organizing out of Kensington, the
5 Kensington (inaudible) Rights Union, and we
6 worked with families, and one of the things that
7 was said to me with families, especially when I
8 would start to work with the moms, is, "I cannot
9 believe that you're going to school to learn to
10 remove children." And that was the view. I
11 mean, people in certain communities are more
12 afraid of social workers than they are of police
13 officers, because of the power to remove
14 children.

15 And I think that the title "social
16 worker" is very, very different from the
17 profession of social worker. The things that
18 make it very different and also make it very
19 important is the empowerment piece. Remember my
20 professor wouldn't allow us to use that word.
21 I'm lucky by graduation that she said I was okay;
22 she gave me a little stamp.

23 Working of assessment instead of
24 diagnosis is something that's very powerful in a
25 social work degree, where we look at, again, the

1 environment, where we're talking about what's
2 enacting on somebody internally as well as
3 externally. Where with diagnosis, you're talking
4 about the medical problem, and then that focus is
5 very, very much on fixing the internal person.
6 Our goal and our mission and our drive is to
7 bring about a more just society, not to enable or
8 to perpetuate or to manage society as it is.
9 It's not to stay where we are. It's not to --
10 you know, a lot of people have a lot of criticism
11 about very different things. Social harm
12 reduction might be one of them, of enabling
13 people and keeping people where they are, when
14 that's actually the opposite of the mission,
15 which is to empower people to strive and move
16 with their own internal power. And it always
17 comes down to that if I give you a fish, I feed
18 you for a day; if I teach you -- it's the same
19 principle of working within society to make
20 society a better place, not to keep ourselves in
21 a job. You know, the goal would be to work
22 ourselves out of a job.

23 Does that answer your question?

24 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Yes,
25 that's it. Any other questions? Thank you very

1 much.

2 MS. NICELY COLANGELO: Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Next on
4 the agenda is a panel from Kutztown University,
5 Janice Gasker, Professor of Social Work; and John
6 Vafeas, Professor and Director of the Master of
7 Social Work Program.

8 DR. VAFEAS: Chairman Sturla,
9 Chairman Adolph, good morning to you and the rest
10 of the House Professional Licensure Committee. I
11 am Dr. John Vafeas. I am the Chair and Professor
12 in the Department of Social Work at Kutztown
13 University in Pennsylvania. I am currently also
14 the Director of the Master of Social Work Program
15 there. This is the end of my 19th year as a
16 faculty member at Kutztown University.

17 In my teaching load, I have
18 instructed both baccalaureate and master level
19 classes. I have been in the leadership team for
20 the accreditation and reaffirmation of the BSW
21 and the MSW programs, and over the years, I have
22 been involved with the field training and
23 internship component of our programs.

24 Prior to coming to Kutztown
25 University, I had teaching experiences at the

1 University of Pennsylvania's Department of
2 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Ryder
3 University's Master of Human Services
4 Administration program. My practice experience
5 of ten years prior to entering academic life
6 ranged from counseling people with developmental
7 and other physical disabilities to vocational
8 rehabilitation, and from welfare to juvenile
9 justice.

10 My testimony here is also informed
11 by my experience serving on the board of
12 directors, and most recently that of a major
13 multi-county mental health and mental retardation
14 provider.

15 I am here today with my colleague
16 Professor of Social Work, Dr. Janice Gasker, who
17 is also the program director of our baccalaureate
18 social work program. Our testimony will be
19 composed of two segments to address two major
20 issues that we believe your Committee should
21 consider.

22 The first, which I will present,
23 is related to the need for licensing adequately
24 prepared baccalaureate level professionals for
25 the field of human services. The second,

1 presented by Dr. Gasker, will touch on
2 considerations which will make such a license an
3 accurate portrayal of practitioners' ability.
4 I'm grateful to have the opportunity to speak to
5 you this morning.

6 From my perspective, licensure is
7 a critical issue for three reasons: First, many
8 consumers of human services are some of the most
9 vulnerable in our society. Their protection is
10 most important to the citizens of the
11 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Second, employers
12 in human services are faced with situations
13 fraught with uncertainty about the reliability
14 and credibility of their new workers. Finally,
15 staff shortages related to the low social value
16 placed on human service workers threatens the
17 well-being and survival of both consumers and
18 agencies alike.

19 Related to the protection of the
20 public, licensed individuals must meet
21 standardized minimal criteria. The licensure
22 process creates assurances that minimal levels of
23 competency may be expected from all service
24 providers. The continuing education so critical
25 to keeping up with changes in the cultural and

1 demographic profile of clientele is also assured,
2 as is a worker's understanding of the changing
3 nature of social ills and the methods of
4 addressing them. Licensure typically also
5 requires personal references, an additional
6 warranty of a person's stability and character.

7 Related to the concerns of
8 employers, licensed individuals bring a level of
9 assurance of competence. Employers in human
10 services experience a severe turnover of staff,
11 which current research attributes to lack of
12 appropriate training. This turnover drains the
13 already limited budgets of governmental and not-
14 for-profit organizations. Without even
15 considering the havoc this turnover wreaks on
16 client service and staff-client relationships, it
17 discourages potentially effective persons from
18 joining the ranks of helping professionals.

19 Finally, recruitment and retention
20 of potentially effective personnel is a serious
21 consideration. Licensing will elevate the
22 stature of human service workers and will make it
23 a more attractive career option for individuals
24 who are concerned for the well-being of others.

25 When I first came to Kutztown, one

1 of my assignments was to develop internship and
2 employment opportunities for students. Our
3 curricular design at that time perfectly
4 paralleled that of the rest of the human services
5 and social science disciplines, in that we were
6 unaccredited, our courses were taken in most any
7 sequence, and our internship was unstructured and
8 optional.

9 At that time, I learned that the
10 public child welfare agencies were in crisis.
11 They faced untenable staff turnover rates,
12 burnout and difficulty identifying quality
13 workers. In spite of these challenges, they
14 refused to train our interns. I learned that
15 this refusal was due to the uneven preparation of
16 students from a variety of disciplines.

17 Concurrently, we were working to
18 accredit our baccalaureate program. The rigors
19 of that standardization process resulted in an
20 increase in the quality and relevance of student
21 training. Internships became structured and
22 required. Working together with the county
23 administrator, we soon structured the program in
24 which our students engaged in appropriate
25 coursework and agency-based practicum

1 experiences. The students soon found themselves
2 on the payroll in permanent positions following
3 graduation.

4 Since then, we have trained over
5 100 child welfare professionals in three
6 counties. The retention rate is so good that
7 when I visit the agencies, I'm surrounded by
8 friendly familiar faces of alumni. This
9 illustrates the significance of standardization
10 in training for staff recruitment and worker job
11 satisfaction. Administrators report that the
12 continuity of services to clients is both
13 efficient and cost effective.

14 This situation parallels what
15 licensing is attempting to accomplish. The trust
16 and competency that licensing provides was
17 established. Faculty recommendation regarding
18 character and competency served as the assurance
19 provided by the recommendations that are part of
20 the licensing. Students were prepared for their
21 workplace, and their performance is predictable.
22 Their training leaves them with a feeling of
23 competence and results in job satisfaction. They
24 enjoy their work, and they stay.

25 While human service licensure is

1 important, an accredited social work degree
2 deserves separate designation in this licensure
3 process. My colleague will speak to the nature
4 of baccalaureate social work education, which
5 will provide the rationale for this thinking.
6 Dr. Gasker?

7 DR. GASKER: Committee members,
8 thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am
9 Janice Gasker. I hold the baccalaureate,
10 Master's and doctoral degree in social work. I'm
11 currently the director of the baccalaureate
12 social work program at Kutztown University, and
13 my teaching assignment includes courses at both
14 the undergraduate and graduate levels.

15 Like Dr. Vafeas, I have also
16 taught in a range of places from community
17 college to the Ivy League; so I have seen the
18 difference in the types of preparation. And I
19 too have been involved in the leadership team,
20 charged with the responsibility for accreditation
21 and reaffirmation of both of our programs. I've
22 practiced as a paraprofessional. I've practiced
23 as a BSW, an MSW and a DSW clinician.

24 In my current position, I advise
25 candidates for the baccalaureate degree,

1 including those who are transferring from
2 community colleges and struggle to meet our
3 program's rigorous standards. This is very, very
4 hard.

5 Your group, your congress, has
6 tried to help us to move people from community
7 college into our state system of higher
8 education. Your Passport Program does work,
9 except it doesn't work for us, and that's because
10 our program is rigorous enough to be sequenced.
11 They must have general education courses before
12 they have social work courses, and that means
13 when folks come to me, I cannot move them into
14 the third year of our program, even though they
15 may have an associate's degree. So it speaks to
16 both the fact that we have a rigorous and a
17 different program, but also the fact that there
18 are absolutely people out there who are really,
19 really going to be good workers as soon as they
20 get training. And we don't have a problem with
21 somebody being licensed as a human service
22 professional. I find that actually to be very
23 necessary.

24 I'm also a consultant to human
25 service provider agencies, and I'm aware of the

1 challenges faced by employers in this field. By
2 the way, the literature says that people who
3 leave public social service, when they do it with
4 math, they find that appropriate training is the
5 thing that allows people to stay. But we have
6 done research actually with focus groups of
7 professionals, and we found out that it's not
8 only the training. What they ask for,
9 unbelievably, because they make so little money,
10 the first thing they ask for is not money. The
11 first thing they ask for is professionalism. Can
12 we have training? Could we have some kind of
13 title? What can we tell our families that we do;
14 amazing. Some of these people make \$9 an hour,
15 and they do not ask for money; they ask for
16 professionalism.

17 I know you heard testimony here in
18 other settings about the importance of licensure
19 for baccalaureate level helping professionals,
20 and of course this is about consumer protection.
21 Related to that as an issue, you must consider if
22 such licensure is to achieve its ends, and that's
23 that consumer protection is only possible if a
24 license is a clear reflection of the license
25 holder's qualifications. In this case, they are

1 different. At the baccalaureate level, human
2 services are provided by graduates from a number
3 of disciplines, psychology, human development,
4 sociology. Each provides a different viewpoint,
5 and, with experience, each may learn to carry out
6 their duties with competence.

7 To establish a standard set of
8 competencies and license these practitioners
9 would be a service to consumers as well as
10 employers. However, if the license is to
11 accurately reflect the services that can be
12 provided by the license holder, then a different
13 designation must be made for social work
14 practitioners. Social work practitioners conduct
15 their work in a manner that is from the day of
16 their graduation qualitatively different from the
17 work of their generic human service peers. This
18 difference is a result of several factors.

19 And I want to start by saying that
20 Jenna made the point that we have little academic
21 freedom in social work education, and she's quite
22 right. But what we do is, we take our faculty
23 and we say to them, "Well, you have a whole lot
24 of creativity. Can you use it for developing
25 program policy? No. Can you use it for

1 developing curriculum? No. Can you use it for
2 developing your own syllabus? No. Can you use
3 it for writing an exam? No." And what we do is,
4 we focus all of this creativity and say, "Now, do
5 your best with your teaching methods." And we
6 have people who are focused on that. And
7 especially we're fortunate to be in a state
8 system where we really pay a lot of attention to
9 teaching. But in our field, this happens
10 naturally, because the accreditation process is
11 so structured, what we do.

12 Social work degrees are granted
13 only by programs that are accredited by a
14 national body, the Council on Social Work
15 Education. This accreditation creates the
16 following distinctions: Their education meets
17 national standards and is periodically evaluated
18 for compliance. You've heard about this.

19 Their educational experience is
20 always based on a liberal arts and sciences
21 foundation with emphasis on critical thinking and
22 an understanding of human behavior from a
23 biological, social and psychological perspective.
24 That's part of why we have difficulty
25 transferring people in. We need them to have

1 that general education foundation before they
2 learn social work practice.

3 Students complete a curriculum
4 based on three pillars: Profession-specific,
5 theoretical knowledge -- we call it "Human
6 Behavior in the Social Environment --
7 evidence-based practice skills and a professional
8 Code of Ethics. Those are unique to our
9 profession.

10 Students are guaranteed
11 instructors with at least two years of supervised
12 post terminal degree practice experience. They
13 experience an instructor-student ratio -- this
14 is mandated -- that allows for professional
15 advising and mentoring. They participate in an
16 intensive structured internship with pre-approved
17 host agencies and program-trained field
18 supervisors. So our field supervisors are not
19 just experienced by time. We go and make sure
20 that they're able to teach our students in a way
21 that's consistent with our curriculum. An
22 accumulation of time does not make a social
23 worker.

24 Social work programs recognize
25 that work and life experience are not substitutes

1 for training. Work and life experience provides
2 professional growth only under structured
3 educational conditions. Consequently, social
4 work skills cannot be acquired simply through
5 work experience.

6 This is another tremendous
7 challenge we face in our student population.
8 Many students come to us with years of
9 experience. I have one right now who is an
10 African-American guy, about 40-something years
11 old, who has been working in social service for
12 years and years, and I find him in my office
13 periodically, because he's saying to me, "Can't I
14 graduate quicker? Can't I use my work
15 experience?" And he can't. And what happens is,
16 as students progress through our program, they
17 begin to realize the importance of the particular
18 social work education, and then they come back to
19 my office and they say, "Wow, I really work
20 differently now." So it's a process that people
21 need to go through to learn the difference
22 between social work and what other people are
23 doing.

24 I have another student who is a
25 community college transfer. This is also a non-

1 traditional student. She comes from a great
2 community college program; so she's got hours and
3 hours of field training that got her credits at
4 school, and she would love for us to take those
5 and say, "Okay, that's the equivalent of our
6 internship; you're done." And we have to say to
7 her, "No, we can't do it." It's not under the
8 supervision of a trained MSW person with
9 experience.

10 Social work graduates demonstrate
11 proficiency in ten areas of competency. Very
12 specific, we need to see them do these skills
13 before they graduate. They use their generalist
14 preparation to be flexible and knowledgeable in
15 working with diverse and marginalized populations
16 with far-ranging problems. In other words, their
17 degree is transferrable from one population to
18 another, from one problem area to another.

19 They assess and respond uniformly
20 to clients' multi-faceted problems via changes in
21 the individual, the family and social programs,
22 using a broad range of skills.

23 I would love to address this
24 question about why not get rid of social workers
25 and then people would get on by themselves and be

1 okay. You know, when we talk to students about
2 social work histories, the first thing we talk to
3 them about is the Elizabethan Poor Law, 1604.
4 Queen Elizabeth through her lifetime recognized
5 that if the government didn't take a hand in
6 social welfare, that -- well, she was going to
7 have riots in London is what she was going to
8 have. If any of you guys can take out the need
9 for those programs from society, please, you
10 know, it would be great. It's not going to
11 happen. Our society just results in some social
12 problems.

13 But the thing about social work
14 is, as you heard from our colleague from Cabrini,
15 we don't just work with the individual. We also
16 work with social programs and social policy, and
17 we teach people to do that so they're never just
18 thinking about the individual; they're also
19 thinking about what can we do to, again, work us
20 out of a job. That's what we're about.

21 Our students employ supervision to
22 evaluate and improve practice. We teach them how
23 to use supervision. This is a critical piece.
24 This is what allows people to get better in their
25 job as they go along through time.

1 They use critical thinking in
2 decision-making and the provision of
3 evidence-based practice. We are using the
4 research literature, and students know how to do
5 that.

6 We empirically evaluate the
7 success of efforts to adhere to this Code of
8 Ethics, and our students commit to life-long
9 growth and development.

10 In sum, the social work graduate
11 brings a set of skills that are qualitatively
12 different. It's a distinction that not only
13 clients but employers have a right to know. A
14 lesson may be learned by the experience of other
15 states. According to the Association of Social
16 Work Boards, at least 30 states license
17 baccalaureate level social workers, and only
18 about six include within that same license
19 graduates of other disciplines. Of interest to
20 us may be the experiences of Michigan, New Mexico
21 and others, where an all-inclusive human service
22 licensure has resulted in so many problems that
23 the policies had to be rewritten to differentiate
24 the qualifications of baccalaureate social work
25 from others. And I think one of the main

1 problems there is the fact that employers don't
2 know what they're hiring so that a lack of
3 differentiation means jobs that are mislabeled
4 and folks who are going into jobs who are yes,
5 well-intentioned, could be very, very competent,
6 but they're being asked to do something they're
7 not trained to do.

8 We're in support of the proposed
9 qualifications for a licensed human service
10 professional. We simply recommend that there
11 also be a licensed baccalaureate social worker
12 designation, with the qualifications of the BSW
13 and an examination.

14 And thank you for your attention
15 to this.

16 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Thank you.
17 Questions from members? All right, one of the
18 charms of going later in the agenda is the
19 questions have been asked.

20 DR. GASKER: True.

21 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Finally on
22 our agenda is Linda Mauro, Interim Dean at Temple
23 University, School of Social Administration.

24 DR. MAURO: Thank you,
25 Representative Sturla and members of the

1 committee, for this opportunity to address you
2 and speak in support of House Bill 2352. As the
3 last person to testify, I have a particularly
4 difficult job, one, to maintain interest and
5 attention, and the other, not to repeat what has
6 already been said. I'm actually going to modify
7 some of my comments, because I think you can read
8 them, and many of them would be repetitive to
9 what others have said even more eloquently.

10 But I wanted to introduce my
11 comments a little bit differently than what is
12 written, because I've been asked by people why I
13 would even testify on behalf of this legislation
14 and why you might even listen to me, because
15 don't I have self-interest. Won't this
16 legislation increase the numbers of baccalaureate
17 students in our programs? And I've given that a
18 lot of thought, and I will address that at some
19 point.

20 But I also want to say that I have
21 been struggling about this piece of legislation,
22 because I think to be a social worker or social
23 work educator in these times is particularly
24 difficult, not only because of the worsening
25 global economic crisis, although that certainly

1 will affect the work of our profession, but
2 rather because the demands for accountability and
3 the concomitant responsibilities that we as
4 educators have to prepare practitioners of
5 competent practice have never felt more
6 overwhelming and may have never been more
7 important.

8 I have been a social worker for
9 about 40 years, and child welfare is the area of
10 practice to which I am committed and which I have
11 been involved in for my entire career, and it is
12 that field of practice, but also others, that
13 serve the most vulnerable citizens of
14 Pennsylvania that I would like us to think about
15 as we consider this legislation.

16 I know Danieal Kelly's name has
17 been invoked already this morning, but think that
18 her torturous life and death are among the
19 reasons we are here today, and I hope that we
20 will never forget the circumstances of her life
21 and death and they're imprinted on our minds and
22 hearts. Why I have chosen to focus on her and to
23 link the tragedy of her death to this legislation
24 is because she and others like her are at the
25 core of my responsibility as a professional

1 social worker and social work educator. It is to
2 serve her that we must pass this legislation that
3 will make it possible for to us improve the
4 delivery of services to the citizens of
5 Pennsylvania. At the same time, however, I want
6 to impress upon you that I feel very strongly
7 that this is going to increase my responsibility
8 and our responsibility as social workers and
9 social work educators.

10 When I got a call by a former
11 commissioner of the Department of Human Services,
12 and Arthur Evans, when he was acting, said to me,
13 "You know, you are the largest provider of social
14 workers to the City of Philadelphia," I actually
15 gasped. And when I stand before those graduates
16 each May and have to certify them, I do let them
17 know how seriously the whole faculty takes this
18 responsibility, and it's something that we do not
19 take lightly. And that is not easy, and there
20 are some times when we are not sure.

21 We don't always have ways to know
22 if we're succeeding. Graduates getting jobs,
23 well, that's perhaps one measure of whether we're
24 succeeding. Pass-fail rates on licensure
25 examinations, that could be another measure of

1 whether we're succeeding. But this legislation
2 will enable us to do something different, and
3 that means that we will be able to identify a
4 category of worker with particular degrees --
5 and I know they won't all have BSWs -- track
6 their performance, then close the feedback loop
7 to the professional educational community. We
8 will be able to see if there are differences in
9 performance and ascertain whether and in what
10 areas we made need to improve educational
11 programs. This is only going to increase our
12 responsibility and add to the accountability
13 which we already have.

14 Others have spoken about the
15 testing grounds and the rigor of our
16 accreditation standards, the screening that goes
17 on in our programs, and I don't want to go over
18 those points again, because I think they have
19 been adequately made. But I want to talk about
20 two areas that have been mentioned, but I would
21 like to mention them again in a slightly
22 different way, and one is ethics, and the other
23 is diversity. I want to point out to you that in
24 terms of our accreditation standards, ethical
25 conduct is part of the academic performance in

1 social work programs. In fact, at Temple
2 University, the social work Code of Ethics is
3 part of the university student Code of Conduct.
4 Students can be sanctioned by the university
5 disciplinary committee by not meeting up to the
6 professional Code of Ethics of social work and
7 for violations of that.

8 Now, that doesn't happen
9 frequently, but it just shows the seriousness
10 with which our academic programs take ethics and
11 the importance of ethics to the kind of service
12 we want to deliver to the Danieal Kellys. It
13 does reinforce the importance of key ethical
14 principles, respect for people, fair treatment,
15 nondiscrimination, confidentiality, et cetera.
16 And given the ethical violations we've seen in
17 our own field but also in others, and Danieal's
18 case gives us another example, we must ensure
19 that our clients are not only treated with
20 knowledge and skills, but they're treated
21 ethically. It is part of the trust the public
22 places in us, and the legislation we are
23 discussing today is a move in the direction of
24 assuring the public we care about how they are
25 treated.

1 Finally, the subject of diversity:
2 Our graduates are tested on their ability to
3 serve people from all walks of life with
4 different abilities, cultures and lifestyles.
5 Our students are asked to examine their own
6 backgrounds to reflect upon and address their own
7 biases and ways of viewing the world. As the
8 world becomes more diverse and the families whom
9 we serve are more troubled, the ability to work
10 with immigrant and refugee families, the elderly,
11 the disabled, the abused children or adults,
12 require that one is trained to address diversity
13 in all of its manifestations. Awareness of an
14 ability to deal with our own biases should not be
15 taken for granted.

16 Social work students and then
17 subsequent, of course, graduates are examined on
18 their ability to minimize any potential
19 individual biases that they have. All of us have
20 them, but that is one of the hallmarks of a
21 social work graduate that they have to
22 demonstrate, that they are able to address, not
23 just identify, but how would they address
24 potential biases that they have or that they may
25 have in the future.

1 Again, to bring this to close, I
2 know you may think I'm coming here to speak so
3 that we can get more students. Undergraduate
4 programs in social work, you should know, have
5 always been small. Contrary to other
6 undergraduate majors, they are not the bread and
7 butter of the university, because they are
8 expensive programs to operate. This is largely
9 because of stringent standards that require not
10 only specific content and processes, but do
11 require faculty-to-student ratios. So that does
12 make us an expensive program. We're very
13 different at Temple. Our master's program is
14 actually less costly than our undergraduate
15 program, and that puts us a little bit at odds
16 with other disciplines in the university.

17 Other professions such as nursing
18 already have levels of professional licensure.
19 The differentiation of the levels of proficiency
20 the public can expect from different levels of
21 practitioners should be accorded to social
22 services. Bachelor's level practitioners should
23 not be considered as proficient as master's level
24 practitioners, but they can work in concert with
25 each other to expand the delivery of services and

1 to offer them more efficiently and effectively.

2 I speak in support of this
3 legislation because I think it's time in
4 Pennsylvania that we raise the standards for
5 those who serve Danieal Kelly and that we
6 recognize the special knowledge, values and
7 skills necessary to serve her.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to
9 share my ideas with you, and I'm available for
10 questions, if there are any.

11 REPRESENTATIVE STURLA: Thank you.
12 Questions from members? I think we're good to
13 go. With that, I will call this meeting to a
14 close. We are adjourned.

15 (The hearing was adjourned at
16 12:45 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me on the Hearing of the within cause and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

DEBRA RICE
PROFESSIONAL COURT REPORTER

DATED: November 15, 2008