

Good Afternoon,

My name is Lesley Hubbard, I live in New Britain and am currently attending CCSU. I will be graduating in a matter of months with a bachelors degree in social work. But my education will not stop there, this summer I will be furthering my education by pursuing a masters degree in social work.

As an approaching graduate, I am acutely aware of the employment struggles I will confront. Like most graduates, the placement of my job heavily influences where I will live. There are multiple factors that make employment locations favorable, such as payment, employee benefits, cost of living, health care needs, and population demographics. But perhaps the most influential factor for social work graduates are the immediate employment rates. The passing of this bill could significantly decrease the challenges that recent grads would face by providing them with the opportunity to become licensed following the completion of their MSW. Currently in CT there MSW students face a catch 22. It is hard to find a MSW job that does not require a license, yet they can not receive said license without field experience. HB 6566 allows MSWs to acquire a license upon their graduation, this adding to the likelihood that recent grads in CT will decide to stay within the state rather than leaving to a more favorable location.

As stated early I currently reside in New Britain, but I am actually a transplant to CT as I originally lived in Massachusetts. Like 47 other states, Massachusetts has a multilevel licensure system. Unlike the bill being presented today, Massachusetts has incorporated a BSW, as well as ASW (associates) level license into their system. According to the MA chapter of NASW "The purpose of licensing in social work is to assist the public through identification of standards for the safe professional practice of social work." The same values are presented in the bill being presented today. For years, I have seen the system in MA provide social workers, and their clients, with essential protections. As stated in the quote, clients are able to see a social worker that has been adequately educated, as well as tested to ensure an equal level of service.

This bill would similarly provide title protection for all social workers. As it stands the saying "I

am a social worker” can be used by individuals who have not yet received their education in social work. Another quote from the MA chapter of NASW states that “All persons who practice social work, use the title “social worker” or any derivative thereof, or refer to themselves as practicing social work must be licensed in Massachusetts.” While this bill can not stop single individuals from claiming they are BSWs, it does protect MSWs and DSWs by stating that they are licensed social workers.

I understand the concern from my fellow social workers that perhaps this license would be risky for the profession as it would allow MSWs to practice without significant life experience. What I have to say in regards to that argument is that MSWs acquire real life experience through their internships. While I can't attest to the experience that a MSW internship entails, I can attest to what I have learned through my BSW internships. I have not learned everything I need know in order to practice on my own. However, what I have learned during my internships has taught me critical life experiences that I may not have received in the work force. The series of internships that I have completed have helped build a solid foundation of experience for me to base my future practice on.

Additionally this bill lays out a framework for MSWs that limits their practice until they have been supervised and completed the required amount of in the field experience. It defines the levels of licensure to be added to statute, “independent practice” and who may perform it, as well as the scope of practice for MSW social workers. In closing, I highly urge you to vote in favor of this bill as it would increase the work force in CT, provide title protection to social workers, and increase the level of service provided to clients. Thank you for your time.