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**Testimony on Raised H.B. 6676
An Act Concerning Licensure of Clinical Social Workers
Public Health Committee
March 16, 2009
Submitted By: Mary Jane Lundgren, RN, MSW**

Members of the Public Health Committee:

As Chair of the NASW Connecticut Chapter of the PACE Committee (Political Action for Candidate Election), I strongly urge you to support H.B. 6676 – “An Act Concerning Licensure of Clinical Social Workers”. Support for this bill would enable Connecticut Social Workers to be on an even par with 45 other states that have multi-level licensure. These include New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Connecticut can no longer ignore the importance of having social workers licensed. This bill would ensure that all consumers would be protected by legal regulation of new clinical social work practitioners. Also, it would guarantee that all clinical social work services would be delivered by qualified licensed practitioners. Social Workers should not be viewed differently from other licensed professionals. As I am also a Registered Nurse, I cannot imagine the nursing profession not being licensed. Licensing assures consumers that all practicing Registered Nurses are equally qualified to practice. Registered Nurses are competent to provide quality care and meet the standards of care for their patients. Doctors, Psychotherapists, Psychologists, Engineers, Attorneys (Bar Exam) and many other trade occupations are licensed. Connecticut consumers deserve to be protected by legal regulation of new clinical social work practitioners.

Licensing MSW graduates would provide additional revenue for Connecticut. The first year that the bill is enacted would provide Connecticut with approximately \$325,000 in revenue and \$150,000 in annual revenue thereafter. While state sector employees would be exempt from the new LMSW license, multi-level licensure would assure that only licensed clinical social workers can practice independently. Multi-level licensure would encourage new MSW graduates to seek employment in Connecticut. Connecticut continues to lose many of its new graduates to other states. As ongoing changes in the healthcare system fosters a demand for licensure upon initial hiring, recent MSW graduates are placed in a difficult position – you need a license but do not have the work experience and therefore cannot get licensed.

Passage of this bill out of the Public Health Committee is the right decision for Connecticut consumers. It will provide quality care and protection for Social Work clients. Connecticut can no longer afford to ignore the importance of maintaining the standard of care for social work clients. On behalf of NASW/CT social workers, I urge you to pass this bill out of committee.

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