

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB6676 An Act Concerning Clinical Social Workers

My name is Andrea Hachey. I apologize that I could not join you however I start my first day at a new position and I am unable to attend today's hearing. I would like to testify in support of the multi-level Licensure bill for social workers in Connecticut- HB6676.

Since 1994, I have been actively involved in the field of social work mainly in the state of Massachusetts which has multiple levels of social work licensure. In 2006, I obtained my Master of Social Work. My primary focus in social work has been case management in the field of child protection from 2001 to 2008. I have also worked in the field of victim advocacy, domestic violence and mental health care.

Since 2002, I have been a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) in the state of Massachusetts. This social work license holds me accountable to certain professional and ethical standards and requires that I keep up with continuing education credits. It does not allow me to practice as a licensed independent clinician. Should my professional conduct be of concern to a client or employer my behavior could be reported to the state and I could potentially lose my license to practice as a social worker in Massachusetts.

In 2008, I moved to the state of Connecticut in order to be closer to my family and ultimately settle down. To my surprise I learned that I could not become licensed as a social worker in the state of Connecticut due to there being only one level of licensure which had several restrictions and requires a minimum of three thousand clinical hours to obtain this license. Since my over ten years of social work experience is primarily in case management I could not apply my work experience toward the necessary clinical hours. This was unsettling because I could not understand why a state relatively social service rich would not encourage a higher number of social workers who work most frequently with vulnerable populations to have appropriate licensure by the state. If I were a plumber or contractor working in someone's home I would need to have the appropriate licensure by the state.

Having multiple levels of licensure in the state of Connecticut would create higher level of professional standards and encourage social workers to seek continuing education credits to further enhance their professional knowledge in order to maintain their license. It would encourage recent Master of Social Work graduates to obtain their license as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and work toward being a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) if they so choose.

It is important to understand that not all careers in social work require that a professional to be a licensed independent clinician. Many case management social work positions do not need to be staffed by an LCSW but many employers require professional licensure of their staff for reasons of liability. Because of this recent graduates look to other states for employment opportunities thereby depleting a vital work force out of the state of

Connecticut. Employers can still require an LCSW for positions that warrant that level of experience and licensure.

I have seen multiple levels of licensure work in Massachusetts. It has not weakened but rather enhanced professional standards in social work. It has allowed for social workers to earn levels of professional licensure on a graduated step process which is reasonable, attainable and fair. I would ask you to support the SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE BILL
- HB6676