



MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK SOCIAL WORKERS

February 19, 2024

Senators Mohamed and Hoffman,

Thank you for your work in sponsoring legislation to reform the social work license. We are writing to provide comments on the differences between SF3880/HF3963, the bill supported by social work professional organizations, and SF3791/HF3626, the bill supported by the Board of Social Work.

The MN Association of Black Social Workers strengthens the Black Family and Black Community through collaborations, partnerships and the professional development of Black Professionals. It is our strong belief that the Association of Social Work Board licensing exam has been a barrier for social workers in our community and interfered with our mission. While we had years of anecdotal evidence, the data released in 2022 confirmed what professionals in our community knew - disparate passage rates based on race; for example, the data shows that people identifying as white pass the BSW exam the first time over 76% of the time, while people identifying as black pass the first time only 33.3%.

In response to this data, the National Association of Black Social Workers re-released their original statement on licensing which begins, *"The licensing of social work establishes an elitist hierarchy within the social work profession which has the long-term implication of significantly changing the racial structure of the human service job market, the kind of quality of service available to the Black consumer, the number of Black service delivery agencies, and the allocation of resources,"* and continues, *"The National Association of Black Social Workers is opposed to any system to license social workers. While NABSW is in full support of standards and quality service and will advocate for such, it realizes the true motivation for licensure is not protection of the public and assurance of quality service."*

[www.nabsw.org/page/positionstatements](http://www.nabsw.org/page/positionstatements)

For this and other reasons, we were relieved that the Board of Social Work amended their original position that would have required that licensure applicants attempt this biased exam before being eligible to pursue the provisional license. While it is our preference to create an option that does not put conditions on some social workers in our community or require extra supervision, it is preferable over our current system. Adding more supervision hours is an unnecessary burden.

Representatives from the MN Association of Black Social Work are part of the Board of Social Work advisory committee. We raised our concern about the BOSW stance. While we understand our role is strictly advisory and the Board has no obligation to take our advice, we are disappointed that they passed over our concerns. It is members of our community who will need to navigate the extra 12.5 proposed hours. While seemingly a small number, we know that social workers often pay out of pocket for this supervision - on average \$40-50/hour and up to \$125/hour. After completing the provisional license pathway, they will begin the supervision required for the next license category, totaling up to 3 or more years of supervised practice. The extra proposed hours are significant to social workers in our community.

We hope that the authors support SF3880/HF3963, the bill that maintains existing supervision requirements.

Respectfully Submitted,

MNABSW (DG/RJ)