

Kansas Chapter
National Association of Social Workers
...advocating for the practice and profession of Social Work...

Proponent Testimony: SB 304

March 6, 2012

House Judiciary

Presented by Sky Westerlund, LMSW

The Kansas Chapter, National Association of Social Workers (KNASW) is the professional association working on behalf of the profession and practice of social work in Kansas. Social workers have been licensed to practice at three levels of expertise since 1976. These are the baccalaureate (LBSW), the master (LMSW), and the clinical social worker (LSCSW). There are over 6000 social workers practicing in the majority of the 105 counties in Kansas. The practice of social work is inclusive across many fields of interest including adoptions, addictions, child welfare, corrections, domestic violence, hospitals and health, hospice and palliative care, mental health, community based prevention, schools, veterans and military, and more.

Domestic violence is a serious problem facing too many members in our communities. Much harm and destruction is caused when an individual commits domestic violence against their spouse, children, and other family members. Stopping domestic violence is a responsibility of everyone.

In the original SB 304, KNASW identified a problem that prevented our support of the bill at that time. Our opposition was the lack of a minimum standard of licensure for persons delivering the batterer intervention services. We worked with the Attorney General's office as well as the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence to reach a compromise. The bill was amended to reflect the agreement.

The amendments included the following:

- After the effective date of this legislation, program directors, program supervisors and program coordinators would need to be licensed by the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board. This represents a minimum qualification for these staff.
- Persons who currently hold those positions, but who are not licensed, may retain their job and duties as long as they stay with the program that currently employs them.
- All Domestic Violence Offender Assessments will be completed by a licensed person.
- Orientation training and continuing education specific to the program will be required.

KNASW stands in support of SB 304 as amended.