

HB 2149 Testimony
Health and Human Services Committee
February 15, 2017

Dear Committee Members,

I write in support of HB 2149. My name is Betsy Cauble. I am a licensed social worker, a social work educator, and a member of the National Association of Social Workers Insurance Company (NASWIC) Board of Directors. NASWIC provides liability insurance to social workers. As a member of the Board of Directors, I see the cost to both social workers and their clients when social workers fail to practice ethically and follow best practices. I also provide risk management workshops across the country to social workers. These workshops stress the importance of ethical social work practice. Fundamentally, ethical social work practice protects not only the social worker but also the public.

I support HB 2149 because it establishes a decision-making social work examining committee comprised of social workers and public members within the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB). This is important for practical and ethical reasons. Organized in 1980, BSRB regulated psychology and social work; now it regulates 7 professions. As a practical matter, expecting board members to know 7 licensing laws, 7 codes of ethics, and best practices for 7 behavioral health professions is unreasonable. There are over 7,000 licensed social workers—58% of the professionals BSRB regulates. Based on numbers alone, social workers will receive more complaints and have more issues to address. A social work examining committee can focus with greater precision on social work issues.

One of the strengths of our behavioral health system is that a variety of professions can bring different perspectives to client issues and problems. When those professions are seen essentially as one, each profession loses some of its identity and ethical practice distinctions among the professions become blurred. This is good for neither the professions nor the public. Non-social work board members will evaluate social work issues through their professional ethical lens, much like a physician may look at a physician's practices differently than a nurse will. If my social work practice is to be scrutinized to assure I followed the social work code of ethics and social work best practices, I want social workers to make that evaluation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

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