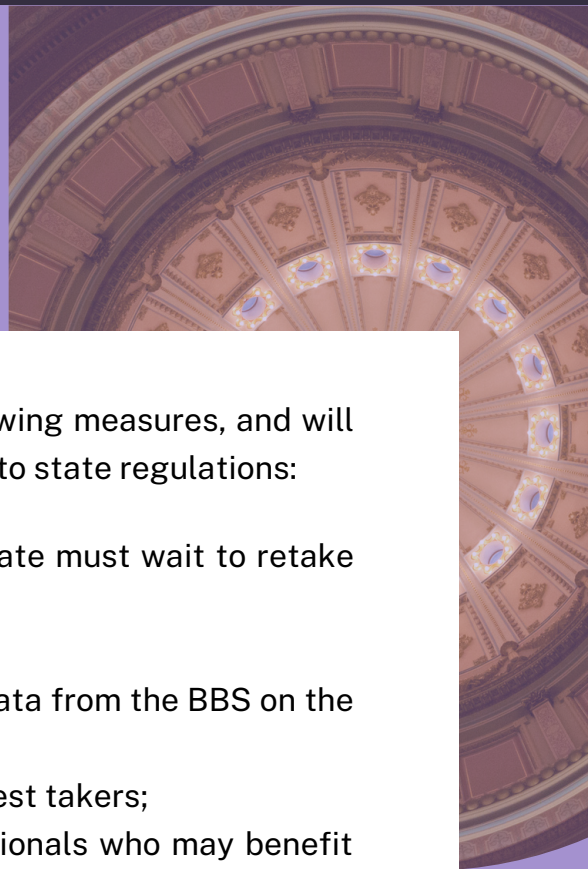


CADD AND NASW-CA STATEMENT ON THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS (ASWB) DATA

The California Association of Deans and Directors (CADD) and the National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter (NASW-CA) find the documented race, age, language, and gender disparities in [social work exam pass rates](#) across the nation to be alarming and in need of immediate action. In California, we are in dire need of licensed clinical social workers who represent the communities of our state and who are multilingual. Barriers to obtaining an LCSW based on race, age, language, and gender present a disservice to the public and the profession as a whole. These disparities are counterproductive to the needs of communities during a time of dire workforce shortages and utter scarcity of resources to address the behavioral health and social needs of marginalized communities across the state.

California does not require a BSW or MSW exam to practice social work, but the state has a clinical exam that is administered by the [Board of Behavioral Sciences \(BBS\)](#) and developed by [ASWB](#) for professionals to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). We understand the need for the state to regulate ethics and practices involving independent clinical licensure, yet believe that the current ASWB test reinforces disparities that are not congruent with social work values. We support the development of alternatives, and strongly urge California leaders of our board and in state government to consider increasing evidence concerning the [inefficacy of standardized testing in clinical exams](#) and to begin important conversations about equitable pathways toward clinical licensure.

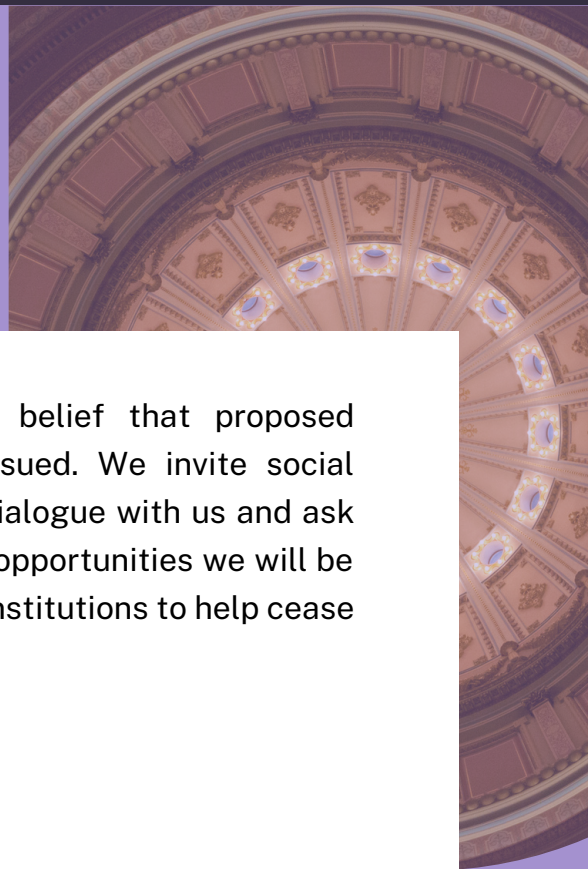


In the interim, CADD and NASW-CA propose the following measures, and will continue to actively advocate for their consideration into state regulations:

- Remove any reference to length of time an associate must wait to retake an exam;
- Waive fees to support re-testing;
- Provide ongoing disaggregation and reporting of data from the BBS on the law and ethics exam;
- Offer free exam preparation resources for repeat test takers;
- Provide accommodations for neurodiverse professionals who may benefit from other forms of assessment for competence; and
- Invest in research and pilot program opportunities to discover new methods to assess clinical competencies.

In addition, we ask that the state BBS collaborate with state-level experts, such as CADD and NASW-CA, to evaluate data and embrace lessons learned from other states and allied professions that have worked to transform standardized testing methods. In doing so, we wish to be bold in the ways our state can creatively address the shortages in our workforce and the need to strongly diversify the provider community to reflect those we serve - our state can serve as a model for developing equitable pathways for clinical advancement in social work.

In our great state of California, we are fortunate to live and work in richly diverse communities where communities of color are the majority. It is distressing that the composition of service providers and those in public and private leadership do not more accurately or effectively mirror our state's demographics. We must stop perpetuating harmful systems that further compound the complexities and inequities of behavioral healthcare.



We, as CADD and NASW-CA, stand firm in our belief that proposed alternatives to testing must be evaluated and pursued. We invite social workers across the state to continue this important dialogue with us and ask that you stay connected to learn about the upcoming opportunities we will be offering to leverage the positions of many of our own institutions to help cease these harms.

Sincerely,



Laura S. Abrams, PhD (she/her)

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Executive Director

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