



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT/THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK/ALBANY, NY 12234

OFFICE OF THE STATE BOARD FOR SOCIAL WORK, 89 Washington Avenue, ALBANY, NY 12234-1000
Tel. (518) 474-3817 Ext. 450 Fax (518) 486-2981 E-mail: swbd@mail.nysed.gov

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Donna DeAngelis, Executive Director
Association of Social Work Boards
400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701
VIA Email: DDeAngelis@aswb.org

Dear Donna:

I am writing to convey to you the concerns of the New York State Education Department and the State Board for Social Work regarding the proposed increase in examination fees for the ASWB examinations. If the proposal is adopted, New York candidates would face an increase in examination fee from \$175 to \$230 for the Masters examination (31% increase) and to \$260 for the Clinical examination (49% increase). Although the ASWB Finance Committee provided extensive information in support of their proposal for an increase in the examination fees, New York will vote against the proposal and encourage other jurisdictions to vote down the proposed increase.

In reviewing the information prepared by the Finance Committee, the State Board and Education Department are faced with an “either-or” proposition: either support the proposed fee increase or risk the elimination or reduction of funding for specific services provided by ASWB to member jurisdictions. However, the information provided by the Finance Committee does not support an alternative, such as the elimination of certain services and a smaller increase in examination fees. Based on the information provided by the Finance Committee, we have been placed in the position of voting against the proposed increase in the examination fees.

Every one is aware of the current economic conditions and the effect upon individuals, families, employers, government and examination vendors. Our economy requires difficult choices in spending, whether it is the challenges of balancing the family’s budget or the licensing and registration of qualified professionals or the administration of programs and services. The ASWB proposal does not indicate a recognition of the difficult situation and the need to reduce spending on certain programs and services in order to maintain funding for essential services. We believe that ASWB should enact significant cost-savings efforts and redirect spending toward the primary purpose, namely the development and administration of a reliable, effective and valid examination program.

The Office of the Professions has very recent and relevant experience with reductions in spending and shifting of priorities. In 2008, we had to eliminate most meetings of the State Boards as well as printing and mailing of information to applicants and licensees, to address the State’s budget deficit. The Education Department was successful in advocating for a 15-percent surcharge on registration fees for the licensed professions, effective September 25, 2009. This increase is the first increase in nearly 20 years for the Office of the Professions and our challenge now is to restore services and staff positions to ensure effective license and discipline of the professions.

The Finance Committee indicated that examination spending is proprietary and, therefore, not available to member jurisdictions. In the absence of data about spending and revenues for the variety of services, we are not in the position of recommending the retention, reduction or elimination of certain programs or services. The ASWB Board of Directors has been charged with the responsible financial management of the Association and, if difficult economic times require the reduction or elimination of certain programs, we trust that the ASWB Board will make appropriate determinations.

I look forward to your report at the ASWB Delegate Assembly regarding the state of the association and the discussion with my colleagues in other jurisdictions regarding the examination fee proposal. I hope that these discussions will include the development of a reasonable approach to examination fees to allow ASWB to continue to provide a reliable and valid examination program for the social work professions.

Best wishes,



David Hamilton, Ph.D. LMSW
Executive Secretary

c: Frank Muñoz, Associate Commissioner
Lawrence DeMers, Director, Professional Licensing
Harrison Fisher, OP examinations
State Board for Social Work