



New York Mental Health Counselors Association

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<https://nymhca.org/>

MEMORANDUM OF OPPOSITION

A5291 Gonzalez-Rojas/S5975 Brouk – an act to repeal the sections of the education law to eliminate the exam requirement for licensure as a master social worker.

The New York Mental Health Counselors Association (NYMHCA) opposes A5291/S5975, which would eliminate the exam requirement for those seeking to become licensed master social workers (LMSW).

The National Association of Social Workers has identified that the Association of Social Work Boards examination for the licensed master's social work profession is biased and fails to support the diversity of the social work profession. NYMHCA recognizes that it is critical that our professions represent the diversity of our state and those who seek social work and mental health services. An exam that fails to consider this diversity and perpetuates biased assessments is inexcusable. However, NYMHCA does not support eliminating the examination to address this issue.

Licensed professions in New York State are required to meet the “three Es” - education, experience, and examination. These three pillars allow New Yorkers to have confidence the health and mental health professionals providing care have been afforded the knowledge, training, and assessment to ensure competency. NYMHCA believes that each pillar is essential to the licensure process for all licensed professionals and does not support the elimination of the exam requirement for social work.

While NYMHCA does not support the elimination of the exam requirement for LMSWs, we strongly support the National Association of Social Work's efforts to bring this issue to the forefront and address the biased nature of the Association of Social Work Board's examination.

For these reasons, NYMHCA opposes A8464-A Gunther/S8765-A Bailey and encourages New York State to seek an alternative vendor for the development and administration of a social work examination that is unbiased and reflects the diversity of the profession and those seeking services.

[NYMHCA](#) is the advocacy organization representing New York's licensed mental health counselors. Mental health counselors are licensed in New York by the [Office of the Professions](#) in the NYS Education Department. There are over 10,000 LMHCs in NYS.