NASW WI TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON REGULATORY REFORM ON APRIL 27, 2017 ON BEHALF OF ASSEMBLY BILL 30

Chairperson Horlacher and members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Reform.

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter, I am speaking in strong support of Assembly Bill 30. Assembly Bill 30 will allow the Social Workers Section to continue to require that applicants for social work certification or licensure pass the state jurisprudence exam. This requirement has been in effect since 1995 when the grandfathering period for social work certification ended.

This bill has been introduced for a similar reason to Assembly Bill 29. About two years ago the Department of Safety and Professional Services Chief Legal Counsel stated that the Social Workers Section needed to eliminate the rule requiring the state exam because it was not supported by the statute.

The state jurisprudence exam ensures that new certified social workers will have basic knowledge of laws affecting the practice of social work in such critical areas as child abuse and neglect, elderly abuse, mental health law, alcohol and drug abuse law, laws affecting juveniles, the state conduct code and other matters. This exam helps protect the public against new employees who would not know critical legal responsibilities in their practice and could harm clients. The 72 county human services departments depend upon this exam to assure that new social workers have the basic knowledge of laws and regulation for their jobs.

When this issue first arose in the last legislative sessions, I spoke with several human services directors who were quite upset that the exam could be eliminated. They believed that this was another unfunded mandate for counties. The elimination of the exam would require the human services department to spend time and money to train the new social workers in areas that the previous social workers had learned from the state exam. For this reason the Wisconsin County Human Services Association voted to oppose the elimination of the exam.

We urge you to support Assembly Bill 30.

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