

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NUMBER: S.B. 1157 Social Work Licensure

SHORT TITLE: Social Work Licensure

SPONSOR(S): Sen. Kerr

FISCAL IMPACT

Yes (X) No () No Estimate Available ()

FY 1999-00 FY 2000-01 FY 2001-02 FY 2002-03 FY 2003-04

REVENUES

General Fund

*** No General Fund Impact ***

Social Work Board \$263,880 \$153,286 \$281,909 \$160,256 \$301,741

PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) &

PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: North Carolina Certification Board for Social Workers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: When it becomes law.

BILL SUMMARY: The legislation makes several changes to the qualifications and licensing procedures for social workers. It reclassifies clinical social workers as licensed clinical social workers. It also modifies the existing social work licensure fee schedule, and introduces new fees.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: The North Carolina certification program for licensed social workers, and the associated fees, were established in 1982. The fees have not changed since that time. In 1993 certification became mandatory for clinical social workers. Previously certification was voluntary. According to Board members, this change dramatically increased the workload of the Board. In 1996-97 the Board provided 570 clinical social work renewal certifications (CCSW). In the following fiscal year the Board offered 1630 clinical social work renewal certifications. These certifications must be renewed every two years. The board charges the maximum fee of \$50.00. Previous renewal revenue is as follows:

Year	Clinical Social Worker Cert.	Revenue
1996-97	576	28,800
1997-98	1639	81,950

While the level of growth is unclear, the Board believes 10% is a reasonable growth rate for the next five fiscal years. The legislation authorizes the Board to increase the fee to \$200.00. However, they anticipate moving gradually to that level. They expect to charge approximately \$150.00 for renewals if the law passes. Assuming the board charges \$150.00) for renewals, the expected revenue from renewals is as follows:

Year	Clinical Social Worker Cert.	Revenue @ \$50	Revenue @ \$150	Change
1999-00	1803	\$ 90,145	\$ 270,435	\$ 180,290
2000-01	697	34,848	104,544	69,696
2001-02	1983	99,160	297,479	198,319
2002-03	767	38,333	114,998	76,666
2003-04	2182	109,075	327,226	218,151

(Note: These estimates, and the historical figures, assume both the clinical and provisional clinical social work certifications are raised to \$150.00).

The Board also certifies several other related types of social work professionals like social work managers and clinical workers with Masters’ degrees. The bill also authorizes an increase in these fees. However, the Board does not anticipate a significant increase in these fees at this time in deference to the lower salaries usually experienced in these fields. In 1996-97 there were 177 individuals in these categories combined. In 1997-98 that number increased to 310. In both years these individuals provided less than 25% of the renewal revenue. The Board currently charges \$50.00 for these certifications.

The bill also authorizes a fee increase for initial applications. Currently the board charges \$50.00. Under the legislation the board can increase the fee to as much as \$200.00. However, the Board has yet to determine what fee will ultimately be charged. Last year the board drew approximately \$28,125 from initial application fees. If the fee were increased to the maximum the Board would see an increase of approximately \$85,000.

The legislation also lowers the administrative fee associated with the national written exam. Under current law the board charges \$50.00 plus the actual cost of the test instrument. The bill lowers that amount to \$40.00, plus test cost. The Board believes this reduction more accurately reflects the actual administrative expense. In 1997-98, 241 individuals paid an examination fee. No significant change is expected in the number of tests given. Therefore, the board will lose approximately \$2,410 as a result of this provision.

The bill establishes a \$25.00 fee for temporary and duplicate licenses and certificates, and a \$200.00 fee for reinstatement. The Board expects the revenue from these changes to be insignificant, but feels such provisions are necessary to clarify the law. This fiscal note assumes \$1,000 in revenue from these provisions.

According to Board members, the revenue from increased fees will be used to establish an office and a permanent full time staff. They note that full time staff is needed to provide professional training and support for social workers and appropriate record keeping. They believe the renewal fees in the bill are in line with those charged by similar professional boards in North Carolina.

The total net change in revenue as a result of the bill is as follows:

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
CCSW Renewals	180,290		198,319	76,666	218,151
Other Renewals	*	*	*	*	*
Initial Applications	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
Exams	(2,410)	(2,410)	(2,410)	(2,410)	(2,410)
Other Provisions	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL*	263,880	153,286	281,909	160,256	301,741

* Since the Board has yet to determine what fees will actually be charged for non-clinical social work renewals, the above estimate represents the **minimum** revenue increase.

NOTE: While certification is required for all clinical social workers, this requirement may be temporarily waived for government employees. The waiver expired on January 1, 1999. As a result, some of the renewal costs may be transferred to county governments that pay for their employees' certification. However, Board representatives believe this number will be small. Neither the Board nor Fiscal Research are aware of any state payment for employee certification. If the state does not pay for its employees' certification renewals, there is no general fund impact.

FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION 733-4910

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DATE: Monday, May 17, 1999



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