

Testimony to House Health and Human Services**March 13, 2019****Support for SB193, Making amendments to BSRB licensing for certain professions**

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB193. My name is Rachel Marsh, I am the Vice President of Advocacy for Saint Francis Ministries. Saint Francis is a **mission-driven nonprofit**, centered in the Episcopal tradition, that has served Kansas children and families since 1945. SFCS currently provides child welfare case management services across 75 counties to upwards of 2,600 children in Family Preservation services and to over 3,300 children in the foster care system. SFCS also provides youth residential services, substance abuse treatment, and outpatient behavioral health services. SFCS greatly appreciates your support in looking at ways to strengthen the human services workforce.

Social Work Reciprocity. Saint Francis employs over 1,100 staff members in Kansas, including hundreds of staff licensed through the Behavioral Services Regulatory Board. The majority of our licensed case management staff are bachelor level social workers (LBSW), followed by licensed master level social workers (LMSW) as well as a number of licensed clinical specialist social workers (LSCSW). Saint Francis has experienced first-hand the challenges in recruiting and retaining social workers, especially in our rural areas. Not infrequently, we hire social workers moving across state lines – whether they are moving home, moving with a spouse, or looking to gain child welfare experience. We support SB193 as it would encourage more social workers to move and work across state lines.

LSCSW qualifications. Many of our MSW social workers express an interest in applying for their license as a clinical specialist social worker (LSCSW). We want to offer our professionals every opportunity for professional development, especially as they increase skills and specializations. However, some MSWs who want to pursue their LSCSWs are discouraged by the years of supervision and requirements necessary to apply for the LSCSW. Highly qualified and competent LMSWs who could be advancing to their clinical specialist level are not doing so because the barrier to application is so high. We support SB193 as it will encourage more MSWs to advance their professional qualifications in pursuit of an LSCSW, which will in turn strengthen the mental health and child welfare workforce.

The Child Welfare System Task Force Tier One Recommendation #1 relates to addressing workforce shortages in the child welfare system. SB193 is one step in addressing workforce challenges in child welfare - not just for child welfare staff but for the mental health providers to treat children, parents, and support caregivers. We must have trained social workers at every level to support an effective child welfare system. We ask for your support in passing SB193.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to stand for questions.