



September 2, 2022

NADD STATEMENT ON ASWB RELEASE OF REPORT ON LICENSURE PASSAGE RATES

As you may now know, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the organization currently responsible for creating, implementing, and monitoring Social Work's National Licensing Examination, recently released a report documenting exam passage rates across the profession. The report helps us to understand the disparities in the diversity of Social Work's workforce nationally. Data clearly evidence extreme racial and age biases in the exam. Moreover, the report reflects an organization that perpetuated use of an exam that has substantively contributed to the documented shortage of diverse licensed social workers.

Suspecting disparities in exam passage rates, Social Work's National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD) had requested these data from ASWB for many years to identify the extent of the issue across the profession. With increasing anecdotal evidence mounting, NADD established a National Licensing Exam Task Force a year ago to elevate the issue and explore alternatives to the existing exam. NADD's primary concern is to ensure an unbiased assessment process such that achieving status as a professional social worker is accessible to all graduates of our accredited programs.

Now, having knowingly held data that clearly reflects extreme test bias, ASWB publicly released not only aggregate data across the profession, but individual State and program level data. The issue is even more egregious than anticipated and reflects a crisis in the profession. NADD calls on social work State licensing boards and legislators to urgently act to immediately address the current exam and assessment process to effect rapid equity in the nation's workforce. Specific immediate and longer-term proposed actions include:

- a. Immediately suspend all fees associated with test taking
- b. Rebate fees paid to persons experiencing multiple test attempts, particularly by groups of people where data demonstrate consistent bias
- c. Suspend Interstate COMPACT discussions based on a uniform 'standardized exam' until biased testing issues are addressed
- d. Consider legislative remedies such as those passed in Illinois and Rhode Island limiting the ASWB test option, recognizing graduation from a CSWE accredited university/college program as an optional pathway toward some levels of licensure
- e. Charge NADD, the academic leaders of the Social Work profession, to collaboratively explore alternatives to the existing exam and monitoring process

NADD is sending separate calls for action to other constituent groups, such as the Council on Social Education and the National Association of Social Workers to work together to identify and address issues that may be contributing to the noted disparities.



We know you share NADD's concern and sense of urgency to effectively respond to these documented disparities. With Social Work workforce shortages across the nation, it is imperative for us all to work together to find responsible resolutions. Should you have any questions that we can help to inform, please contact Dr. Martell Teasley, President of NADD, at martell.teasley@utah.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martell Teasley".

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