

Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board

Budget Testimony

Senate Finance Committee

May 4, 2011

Senator Chris Widener and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Jim Rough and I am the Executive Director of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

Thank you on behalf of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (CSWMFT Board) for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony and address any questions that you may have this afternoon.

Overview of Board: The mission of the CSWMFT Board is to protect the citizens of the State of Ohio from unqualified and incompetent counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists. The Board accomplishes this mission through the establishment of requirements for minimal competency for entry into three separate but related professions. The Board has the statutory authority to grant licenses and registrations for counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists, and oversees the administration of professional examinations. The Board also has the responsibility for establishing and enforcing practice standards and codes of conduct for all three professions. To ensure appropriate continuing competence, the Board pre-approves Ohio continuing education programs necessary for renewal.

There are currently over 32,650 licensed and registered individuals including: over 15,350 Licensed Social Workers, 7,450 Licensed Independent Social Workers, 3,600 Licensed Professional Counselors, 4,350 Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors, 184 Independent Marriage and Family Therapists and 77 Marriage and Family Therapists with active licenses. The Board has over 600 individuals actively registered as Social Work Assistants. The Board has over 400 individuals registered as Social Worker Trainees and over 750 individuals registered as Counselor Trainees, whom are master's program students working towards licensure as social workers and professional counselors.

The Board has a staff of 12 full time employees, which includes an Executive Director, a Deputy Director, Two Investigators, an Administrative Assistant, four Applications Coordinators, who process new applications, a Renewal Coordinator, and two additional clerical positions. Our staff manages all three professions, our investigators investigate complaints that arise out of all three professions, our renewal coordinator is responsible for the renewal of licenses for all three professions, several of our clerical staff work with all three professions.

House Bill 153: We believe that the budget as proposed will support the functions of the Board with the assumption that Senate Bill 5 goes into effect. HB 153 established the Board's budget with a three percent cut in payroll budget. This level of funding may impact our non-payroll appropriation but we believe we can meet FY 2012 needs, but may be short appropriations in FY 2013 primarily due to the biennial State Auditors audit.

The Executive Budget Recommendations contained in House Bill 153 in its current form will:

- Fund the operations of the Board with the goal of protection of the public;
- Fund three professional standards committees and staff for licensing counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists;
- Fund processing of over 3,000 new license applications, 15,000 license renewal applications, 700 continuing education program applications, and 300 continuing education provider applications per fiscal year;
- Fund investigation of over 250 complaints per fiscal year;
- Fund tracking of over 3,000 licensing examination requests and results, over 3,000 transcripts, 3,000 criminal records checks and over 4,000 supervision documents per fiscal year;
- Support the improvement of IT and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of processes;
- Fund a new position to enhance continuing education program reviews and increased audits of licensee's continuing education audits following renewals, which is paid for by new fees for continuing education program applications.

Revenue Information: The Board is self-sufficient and our revenues result from licensing and renewal fees. The Board does not receive any general revenue funds (GRF). The Board has requested several new fees to fund a new position focused on continuing education program and licensee continuing education audits.

The Board anticipates our revenue to moderately exceed our spending authority. Approval of the increased fees would provide \$1,275,060 per fiscal year in estimated revenue for an authorized spending level of \$1,204,235 for FY 2012 and \$1,234,756 for FY 2013 as reported in budget documents from OBM.

- Charge a fee for Continuing Education Program applications – \$35,760 in revenues
- Charge a fee for Continuing Education Provider application – \$31,750 in revenues
- Charge a fee for additional wall certificates – \$7,500 in revenues

Operational Changes: Budget reductions and increases:

- The Board has not raised licensure application or renewal fees since 1985
- The Board has cut travel, in-state and out-of-state by 40%
- We are working hard to reduce IT costs. We are working with Department of Administrative Service's Office of Information Technology to simplify and improve our IT infrastructure and reduce costs. Our IT Internet connectivity and Local Area Network (LAN) costs almost doubled in FY 2010
- We changed our PC and server maintenance from DAS-OIT support to a MBE-EDGE vendor reducing costs in this area by 50%
- Rent and other costs while at low rates are still increasing each biennium. Our rent at the LeVeque Tower is only 75 to 80 percent as much as the same rent in the State Office Tower, but will increase by 3%
- We have cut mailing costs by using email and online applications and forms
- Our copier count has dropped by more than 33%
- The DAS cost-per-copy review showed our current setup to be less expensive than the cost-per-copy program

- DAS services used 46% of our non-payroll budget in FY 2010
- The cost of the State Auditor's biennial audit is now paid by state agencies, which increases our non-payroll expenses by 5.4% in odd numbered years

Board Efficiencies: Our Board is one of Twenty-five of Ohio's 250 independent/autonomous licensing boards, which share services through a central business office, the Central Service Agency. The Central Service Agency provides human resources, payroll and fiscal processing for the participating boards. These 25 boards have used shared services since the late 1960s when the Central Service Agency was created and housed at the Board of Cosmetology. Combined, these twenty-five boards regulate over 340,000* individuals, business firms, and schools throughout Ohio, but through the use of the Central Service Agency are able to provide effective and efficient service to the citizens of Ohio with minimal staffing needs. The boards also share a common licensure tracking system that is maintained and operated by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). This Internet based system was created in 2002 and allows the boards to provide online renewal, application, licensure verification and the ability to generate valuable reports related to licensure.

Our Board and the Engineers and Surveyors Board have been collaborating to reduce our IT infrastructure costs. Each board had an AT&T T-1 line (1.5 Megabyte each) and have canceled those lines and replaced them with a Time Warner Cable Five Megabyte connection at slightly over half the cost per board that we were paying. My Board has also implemented our own switch connected to a single router serving both boards, which reduced our LAN maintenance costs with DAS. We plan to use these savings to increase ethics training outside of Columbus by our investigative staff and cover the belt tightening expected from OBM and the Governor.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear and provide testimony. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee members may have.

Sincerely,

James Rough
Executive Director