



## Legislation Text

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### Res. No. 362

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.5291/S.5975, the Social Worker Workforce Act.

By Council Members Bottcher, Gennaro, Louis and Brewer

Whereas, Social workers help individuals cope with problems in their everyday lives and help people function the best they can in their environment; and

Whereas, Demand for social workers in New York City and across the country is rising along with increased needs for mental health and substance use treatment; and

Whereas, Individuals are struggling to access mental health care, with less than half of Americans receiving the treatment they need, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and

Whereas, A May 2022 survey conducted by the New York State Department of Labor, Business Council, Empire State Development, and the Regional Economic Development Council found that social work jobs ranked the third most difficult to fill among all sectors in New York City; and

Whereas, A 2022 audit by state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli found that 80 percent of New York City schools did not meet the recommended ratio of one social worker for every 250 students; and

Whereas, The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment for social workers will grow faster than the average for all occupations, with about 74,900 annual openings predicted through 2031; and

Whereas, To become licensed as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) in New York State, individuals must graduate from an accredited social work program with a clinical curriculum and internship approved by the State, complete training in the identification and reporting of child abuse, and pass an

Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) clinical examination; and

Whereas, A 2022 ASWB analysis found major racial disparities in who passes the LMSW licensing exam, with only 44 percent of Black social work graduates and 62 percent of Hispanic/Latino graduates passing in 2021, compared to 85 percent of white graduates; and

Whereas, Because of these racial disparities, Illinois, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Utah have passed legislation eliminating the requirement for an examination to receive a LMSW license; and

Whereas, After Illinois removed the requirement for non-clinical social workers to take a licensure test, the state gained nearly 3,000 new licensed social workers in the first six months of 2022, compared to just 421 during the same period in 2021, according to the National Association of Social Workers in Illinois; and

Whereas, A.5291, introduced by Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas and pending in the New York State Assembly, and companion bill S.5975, introduced by Senator Samra Brouk and pending in the New York State Senate, the Social Worker Workforce Act, would repeal the requirement that social work graduates must pass an examination to receive a LMSW license; and

Whereas, The Social Worker Workforce Act would increase the workforce of mental health providers in New York and increase the diversity of the social work workforce; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.5291/S.5975, the Social Worker Workforce Act.

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