



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 23

February Session, 2026

House Bill No. 5166

House of Representatives, March 16, 2026

The Committee on Public Health reported through REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY of the 133rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 20-195n of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

3 (a) No person shall practice clinical social work unless such person
4 has obtained a license pursuant to this section.

5 (b) An applicant for licensure as a master social worker shall: (1) [(A)]
6 Hold a master's degree from a social work program [(i)] (A) accredited
7 by the Council on Social Work Education, or [(ii)] (B) that is in candidate
8 status for accreditation by said council and offered by an institution of
9 higher education in the state during or after the spring semester of 2024,
10 and prior to the spring semester of 2028; [,] or [(B)] (2) if educated
11 outside the United States or its territories, have completed an
12 educational program deemed equivalent by the council. [,] and (2) pass
13 the masters level examination of the Association of Social Work Boards
14 or any other examination prescribed by the commissioner.]

15 (c) An applicant for licensure as a clinical social worker shall: (1) Hold
16 a doctorate or master's degree from a social work program accredited
17 by the Council on Social Work Education or, if educated outside the
18 United States or its territories, have completed an educational program
19 deemed equivalent by the council; (2) have three thousand hours post-
20 master's social work experience which shall include not less than one
21 hundred hours of work under professional supervision by a licensed
22 clinical or certified independent social worker, provided on and after
23 October 1, 2011, such hours completed in this state shall be as a licensed
24 master social worker; and (3) pass the clinical level examination of the
25 Association of Social Work Boards or any other examination prescribed
26 by the commissioner. On and after October 1, 1995, any person certified
27 as an independent social worker prior to October 1, 1995, shall be
28 deemed licensed as a clinical social worker pursuant to this section,
29 except a person certified as an independent social worker on and after
30 October 1, 1990, shall not be deemed licensed as a clinical social worker
31 pursuant to this chapter unless such person has satisfied the
32 requirements of subdivision (3) of this subsection.

33 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section,
34 the commissioner may grant a license by endorsement to an applicant
35 who presents evidence satisfactory to the commissioner that the
36 applicant [(1)] is licensed or certified as a master social worker or clinical
37 social worker in good standing in another state or jurisdiction whose
38 requirements for practicing in such capacity are substantially similar to
39 or higher than those of this state. [, and (2) has successfully completed
40 the master level examination of the Association of Social Work Boards,
41 or its successor organization, or any other examination prescribed by
42 the commissioner.] No license shall be issued under this subsection to
43 any applicant against whom professional disciplinary action is pending
44 or who is the subject of an unresolved complaint.

45 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this section,
46 the commissioner may grant a license by endorsement to an applicant
47 who presents evidence satisfactory to the commissioner that the
48 applicant (1) is licensed or certified as a clinical social worker in good

49 standing in another state or jurisdiction whose requirements for
50 practicing in such capacity are substantially similar to or greater than
51 those of this state, and (2) has successfully completed the clinical level
52 examination of the Association of Social Work Boards, or its successor
53 organization, or any other examination prescribed by the commissioner.
54 No license shall be issued under this subsection to any applicant against
55 whom professional disciplinary action is pending or who is the subject
56 of an unresolved complaint.

57 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, an applicant who
58 is licensed or certified as a clinical social worker or its equivalent in
59 another state, territory or commonwealth of the United States may
60 substitute three years of licensed or certified work experience in the
61 practice of clinical social work in lieu of the requirements of subdivision
62 (2) of subsection (c) of this section, provided the commissioner finds that
63 such experience is equal to or greater than the requirements of this state.

64 (g) The commissioner shall notify each applicant who is approved to
65 take an examination required under subsection [(b),] (c) [, (d)] or (e) of
66 this section that such applicant may be eligible for testing
67 accommodations pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities
68 Act, 42 USC 12101 et seq., as amended from time to time, or other
69 accommodations, as determined by the Association of Social Work
70 Boards, or its successor organization, which may include the use of a
71 dictionary while taking such examination and additional time within
72 which to take such examination.

73 Sec. 2. Section 20-195o of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes
74 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
75 *1, 2026*):

76 (a) Application for licensure shall be on forms prescribed and
77 furnished by the commissioner. Each applicant shall furnish evidence
78 satisfactory to the commissioner that he or she has met the requirements
79 of section 20-195n, as amended by this act.

80 [(b) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 20-195n concerning

81 examinations, on or before October 1, 2015, the commissioner may issue
82 a license without examination, to any master social worker applicant
83 who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commissioner that, on or
84 before October 1, 2013, he or she held a master's degree from a social
85 work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or,
86 if educated outside the United States or its territories, completed an
87 educational program deemed equivalent by the council.

88 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 20-195n concerning
89 examinations, the commissioner shall waive the requirement to pass the
90 masters level examination of the Association of Social Work Boards or
91 any other examination prescribed by the commissioner, as described in
92 subsection (b) of section 20-195n until January 1, 2026, at which time
93 such requirement shall be reinstated. Not later than July 1, 2025, the
94 commissioner shall notify institutions of higher education offering
95 social work programs about the reinstatement of the examination for all
96 persons graduating after January 1, 2026.]

97 [(c)] (b) Each person licensed pursuant to this chapter may apply for
98 renewal of such licensure in accordance with the provisions of
99 subsection (e) of section 19a-88. A fee of two hundred dollars shall
100 accompany each renewal application for a licensed clinical social worker
101 and a fee of one hundred twenty-five dollars shall accompany each
102 renewal application for a licensed master social worker. Each such
103 applicant shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the commissioner of
104 having satisfied the continuing education requirements prescribed in
105 section 20-195u.

106 [(d)] (c) No fee shall be required for an application for licensure under
107 subsection (a) of this section.

108 [(e)] (d) (1) An individual who has been convicted of any criminal
109 offense may request, in writing, at any time, that the commissioner
110 determine whether such individual's criminal conviction disqualifies
111 the individual from obtaining a license issued or conferred by the
112 commissioner pursuant to this chapter based on (A) the nature of the
113 conviction and its relationship to the individual's ability to safely or

114 competently perform the duties or responsibilities associated with such
115 license, (B) information pertaining to the degree of rehabilitation of the
116 individual, and (C) the time elapsed since the conviction or release of
117 the individual.

118 (2) An individual making such request shall include (A) details of the
119 individual's criminal conviction, and (B) any payment required by the
120 commissioner. The commissioner may charge a fee of not more than
121 fifteen dollars for each request made under this subsection. The
122 commissioner may waive such fee.

123 (3) Not later than thirty days after receiving a request under this
124 subsection, the commissioner shall inform the individual making such
125 request whether, based on the criminal record information provided,
126 such individual is disqualified from receiving or holding a license
127 issued or conferred pursuant to this chapter.

128 (4) The commissioner is not bound by a determination made under
129 this subsection, if, upon further investigation, the commissioner
130 determines that an individual's criminal conviction differs from the
131 information presented in the determination request.

132 Sec. 3. Section 20-195t of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes
133 is repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2026*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	20-195n
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	20-195o
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	Repealer section

PH *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Public Health, Dept.	GF - Revenue Gain	None	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill eliminates the examination requirement for master social worker licensure, resulting in an annual minimal General Fund revenue gain in license renewal fees beginning in FY 28. The amount of the revenue gain will depend on the number of additional individuals who apply for their initial license at no cost and, in FY 28 and beyond, annually renew their master social worker license for \$125 due to this change. There are currently 5,608 master social workers licensed by the state.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to any change in the license renewal fee.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5166*****AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill eliminates the requirement for a master social worker license applicant to pass the Association of Social Work Boards' (ASWB) master's level examination, or other examination the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner prescribes. (Existing law temporarily suspended this requirement between June 7, 2023, and January 1, 2026.)

It correspondingly eliminates a provision that authorizes DPH to issue a 120-day temporary permit that allows master social worker license applicants who have a master's degree from a social work program but have not yet taken the licensure examination, to practice under professional supervision.

Under current law and the bill, applicants for a master social worker license still must have a master's degree from a social work program that is (1) accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), (2) in-state and has candidate status with CSWE during or after the 2024 spring semester and before the 2028 spring semester, or (3) deemed equivalent by CSWE, if educated outside of the U.S. and its territories. Applicants for licensure by endorsement must be licensed or certified as a master social worker in good standing in another state or jurisdiction with requirements substantially similar or higher than Connecticut's.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

BACKGROUND***Social Work Licensure***

By law, Connecticut licenses social workers at two levels: master

social worker and clinical social worker. Applicants for a clinical social worker license must (1) have a doctorate or master’s degree from a CSWE-accredited program or, if educated outside of the U.S. and its territories, a program deemed equivalent by CSWE; (2) complete 3,000 hours post-master’s social work experience with at least 100 hours supervised by a licensed clinical social worker or certified independent social worker; and (3) pass the ASWB’s clinical level examination.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 25 Nay 6 (03/02/2026)