



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

May 21, 2010

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz  
Secretary of the State  
20 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Secretary Bysiewicz:

I hereby return without my signature House Bill 5286, *An Act Concerning Licensure of Master and Clinical Social Workers*. This bill creates a new category of licensed master social workers in Connecticut, while failing to provide adequate funding to the Department of Public Health (DPH) for implementation of this new licensure type.

Social work is an essential occupation. Thousands of social workers are employed in a multitude of settings, from hospitals, nursing homes and schools, to prisons and public agencies. These professionals assist Connecticut residents in their most vulnerable times, address social, emotional and psychological needs and strengthen our families and communities.

Similarly, the merits of this Act are plentiful – enhanced opportunities for employment, retention in the State of college graduates and promotion of quality of care standards. I am sympathetic to the challenges faced by our new Masters in Social Work (MSW) graduates who have difficulty procuring employment due to the lack of opportunities available in Connecticut for unlicensed social workers. I am also aware that Connecticut is only one of a handful of states without the dual licensure categories for social workers. However, the passage of this Act without corresponding funds in the budget is no cause for celebration -- only confusion.

The effects of the Act's use of the phrase "if appropriations are available for such implementation" in Section 9 are unknown. The Office of Fiscal Analysis note suggests no less than four possible scenarios<sup>1</sup> - all of which pose significant, unforeseen

---

<sup>1</sup> The OFA Fiscal Note provides that the Act will likely result in four outcomes: "(1) DPH will proceed with the establishment of the new licensure category and require a deficiency appropriation in FY 11; (2) DPH will delay the establishment of the new licensure category pending the approval of additional appropriations to meet this mandate in future fiscal years; (3) DPH will shift administrative resources from other departmental priorities to establish the new licensure category, thereby impacting existing departmental programs; or (4) DPH will not establish the new licensure category."

disadvantages to the residents of Connecticut – in deficiency appropriations, cutbacks to other critical programs which DPH administers or the unrealized plans of new Connecticut MSW graduates.

In addition, whether intentional or simply drafting oversight, the phrase “if appropriations are available for such implementation” is untested and represents a marked departure from the Legislative Commissioners’ Office phrasing, “within available appropriations.” A quick search of existing Connecticut’s statutes reveals the “within available appropriations” phrase used in over 300 different sections of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the “if appropriations are available” phrase used only once in the last year.

Legislation should be clear, purposeful and promote certainty on behalf of the affected Connecticut residents, employers, educational institutions and regulatory bodies. Employers need the ability to plan for their workforce and likewise, social work students need the ability to plan for their future. For these reasons, pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut and Article III of the Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Jodi Rell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

M. Jodi Rell  
Governor