

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Janet Wood](#); [Brittany Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Friday, June 06, 2014 4:07:57 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Friday, June 06, 2014 4:07 PM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, June 6, 2014 - 16:07

Agency: DEPARTMENT STATE HEALTH SERVICES DSHS

First Name: Melissa

Last Name: Milliorn

Title: LMSW-IPR

Organization you are affiliated with: NASW member

City: Tuscola

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed: Regarding the consideration of moving the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners to TDLR versus reauthorization of DSHS, I have many concerns as a licensed social worker in Texas. My concerns are primarily related to a lack of funding and staffing resources in the office of the TSBSWE; poor service delivery and response time due to poor staffing, a lack of protection of the citizens of Texas as well as licensed professional social workers in Texas related to complaints, and a lack of research data to measure effectiveness of licensee's activities and planning for the need for more professional social workers in the workforce (as well documented by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

- An independent board or advisory board must consist of key stakeholders, members of the profession, and customers in order to be effective. It is effective for staff to perform the initial review of complaints to determine if the complainant meets criteria for investigation. Staff should include a trained legal professional to evaluate the first stages of the complaint and determine if criteria is met for investigation. This board must be empowered to hear complaints, rule on those complaints, and decide the disciplinary actions to be taken. The board must have access to licensed professional Social Workers to provide professional expertise in rule development, rule changes, and implementation.
- The rules must be presented in a clear manner that results in a transparent process for the public and the licensees. The current website and lack of staff availability to answer questions does not meet these criteria. Adequate staff and IT funding is critical to a well functioning board. DSHS is extremely challenged in many areas because of lack of funding and staffing resources to effectively operate this licensing office, not because they necessarily lack focus.

- If another agency, such as TDLR, will oversee the Social Worker Licensing Board, the agency must possess the necessary public health, social work, and mental health expertise to fully understand scope of professional practice issues and to ensure that Texas has a properly educated and trained workforce. Clearly, the regulation of helping professionals is not equivalent to the current occupations regulated by TDLR such as the regulation of cosmetologists and plumbers.
- Any professional regulatory agency must collect and analyze data on the professionals as a means of planning for future workforce needs, as well as to measure effectiveness of the licensure activities. This is not currently happening at DSHS, due to lack of personnel and funding resources, and must happen regardless of the agency overseeing the board.
- The current Executive Director of the Board is not a social worker, but is supervised by a licensed social worker. As a member of NASW Texas, I strongly advocate for professional, licensed social work managerial level staff at the licensing board, regardless of the regulatory agency that provides oversight. Structurally, the staff of the licensing board must report ultimately to the Executive Director to ensure that there is consistency and proper oversight of its functions.
- As a member of NASW Texas, I am advocating that the statute of limitations for complaints to the social work licensing board should be in line with other professional fields, five to no more than seven years. Any changes must contain a grandparent clause to include all complaints covering events prior to the change. Any changes must comply with all other statutes regulating the practice of social work.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree