



**Testimony on SB 2357**  
**North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers**  
**13 February, 2025**  
**Senate Workforce Development Committee**

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Alison Traynor, and I am president of the board of the North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-ND). We respectfully oppose Senate Bill 2357, which seeks to dissolve existing professional mental health licensing boards to create a composite mental health board.

While we recognize the intent behind streamlining regulatory processes, this proposal would undermine the integrity of individual professions and create unintended consequences that weaken consumer protections and professional accountability.

Each profession—social work, psychology, addiction counseling, professional counseling, and marriage and family therapy—operates under distinct ethical frameworks, education requirements, and best practices. A one-size-fits-all regulatory approach ignores these differences, potentially compromising the quality of care for North Dakotans.

Merging these boards would mean:

- Licensure decisions would be diluted, with fewer representatives speaking to the nuances of each profession.
- Board members would be stretched thin, requiring them to understand and enforce regulations across multiple complex disciplines.
- Ethical considerations would be generalized, rather than upheld within the specialized frameworks that have long ensured the highest standards of care.

Rather than dismantling well-functioning professional boards, we encourage the Legislature to explore solutions that improve efficiency while maintaining the integrity of each profession. Targeted investments in staffing, technology, and administrative support could reduce licensure delays and modernize processes without compromising professional oversight.

We believe that North Dakota's workforce challenges should be addressed in ways that protect public safety, maintain strong professional standards, and ensure timely access to mental health services.

On behalf of NASW-ND, we urge a DO NOT PASS recommendation on SB 2357. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Alison Traynor, MSW, MPH, LCSW  
President, North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers