

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2017 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 2810**

BY DELEGATE ROWE

[Introduced March 7, 2017; Referred  
to the Committee on Government Organization then  
the Judiciary.]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,  
 2 designated §30-30-14a, relating to social workers and creating a litigation practice license  
 3 for social workers.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

1 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, be amended by adding thereto a new section,  
 2 designated §30-30-14a, to read as follows:

**ARTICLE 30. SOCIAL WORKERS.**

**§30-30-14a. Litigation practice license to practice as a social worker.**

1 The Board of Social Work, in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Appeals and the  
 2 higher education institutions in the state, shall review special licensing for social workers licensed  
 3 under this article to practice independently in the courts of the state in juvenile, child abuse and  
 4 negligent proceedings. Their specialty shall be focused on pre- and post-litigation prevention  
 5 services.

6 The Legislature finds that many circuit courts are overloaded with juvenile and child abuse  
 7 cases and too few prevention outcomes. "Litigation social workers", acting as independent  
 8 professionals, would be able to more efficiently seek and secure better outcomes than out-of-  
 9 home placement or free release of children or juveniles back into dysfunctional family  
 10 relationships with few or no serious failure to the needs of children or juveniles. "Litigation social  
 11 workers" would encourage and lead court-ordered mediation for needed services, and would  
 12 participate fully in the litigation process with court appointments as needed. The purpose, training  
 13 and performance of the "litigation social workers" shall be determined by the Supreme Court of  
 14 Appeals in cooperation with the board of social workers and participating university graduate  
 15 social work programs.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a litigation practice license for social workers.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.