

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2022 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 237

FISCAL
NOTE

BY SENATOR LINDSAY

[Introduced January 12, 2022; referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources;
and then to the Committee on 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:

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 negligence 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 the free release of children or juveniles back into dysfunctional family
 10 relationships with few or no serious accommodations to the needs of children or juveniles.
 11 "Litigation social workers" would encourage and lead court-ordered mediation for needed services
 12 and would participate fully in the litigation process with court appointments as needed. The
 13 purpose, training, and performance of the "litigation social workers" shall be determined by the
 14 Supreme Court of Appeals in cooperation with the Board of Social Work and participating
 15 university graduate 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.