

1 **H. B. 4418**

2  
3 (By Delegates Fleischauer, Barrett, Perdue,  
4 Staggers, Sponaugle, Eldridge, Hamilton, White,  
5 Pethtel, Tomblin and Barill)

6 [Introduced February 5, 2014; referred to the  
7 Committee on Health and Human Resources.]

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10 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by  
11 adding thereto a new section, designated §9-5-22, relating to  
12 requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to  
13 consult with the Division of Personnel to establish a revised  
14 classification plan with a career ladder for certain social  
15 workers; making legislative findings; and requiring a report.

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

17 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended  
18 by adding thereto a new section, designated §9-5-22, to read as  
19 follows:

20 **ARTICLE 5. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.**

21 **§9-5-22. Career ladder for social workers; legislative findings.**

22 (a) The Legislature finds:

23 (1) There is a need to protect West Virginia's most vulnerable  
24 youth, families and adults by stabilizing the professional social

1 work and protective service workforce within the department.  
2 Recruitment to and retention in these crucial positions is  
3 challenging due to high caseloads, low and stagnant salaries,  
4 difficult work situations involving limited back-up or support,  
5 vicarious traumas, personal safety risks and enormous stress;

6 (2) There is a need to stem the huge tide of turnover within  
7 the department in direct service occupations, and achieve costs  
8 savings from avoiding constantly training new employees. Too often  
9 the direct practice expertise of these employees is lost as they  
10 choose to move to less stressful positions in supervision or  
11 program management, or leave the department for the public sector  
12 entirely to obtain salaries more commensurate with their skills and  
13 expertise elsewhere; and

14 (3) There is a need to promote a work culture of excellence by  
15 rewarding social workers who earn advanced degrees and want to  
16 remain in direct or advanced practice. Providing a meaningful  
17 career ladder would communicate that these more experienced,  
18 dedicated employees are valued by our state, and would improve  
19 organizational culture by allowing them to serve as mentors to more  
20 junior direct practice staff.

21 (b) The commissioner is directed to consult with the Division  
22 of Personnel to establish a revised classification plan with a  
23 career ladder or tier for those social workers who perform advanced  
24 direct practice in their specific job functions. The plan shall be

1 completed no later than July 1, 2014 and submitted to the Joint  
2 Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Resources.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Health and Human Services to consult with the Division of Personnel to establish a revised classification plan with a career ladder for certain social workers by July 1, 2014. The bill makes legislative findings and requires a report.

This section is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.