

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 20

BY SENATORS LINDSAY, JEFFRIES, AND WOELFEL

[Introduced February 10, 2021; 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 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 Work and participating university graduate social
 15 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.