

Comments of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission



State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Regulation #16A-6920 (IRRC #2983)

Biennial Renewal Fees

May 8, 2013

We submit for your consideration the following comments on the proposed rulemaking published in the March 9, 2013 *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Our comments are based on criteria in Section 5.2 of the Regulatory Review Act (71 P.S. § 745.5b). Section 5.1(a) of the Regulatory Review Act (71 P.S. § 745.5a(a)) directs the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors (Board) to respond to all comments received from us or any other source.

Fiscal impact; Direct and indirect costs to the Commonwealth, political subdivisions and private sector.

This proposed rulemaking would increase the biennial renewal fee for licensed social workers, clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists and professional counselors from \$75 to \$115. This fee was increased by \$30 in 2008. At that time, it was anticipated that the increase would be sufficient to cover the Board's expenses for at least nine years.

Commentators, including the National Association of Social Workers and the Pennsylvania Society of Clinical Social Workers, have submitted comments opposing the fee increase. They contend that the increase will have an adverse fiscal impact on licensees of the Board. The House Professional Licensure Committee (Committee) submitted comments requesting "information pertaining to the major cost centers of the Board and any significant increases in expenditure."

We share the concerns raised by the commentators and the Committee and seek further explanation of why this increase is needed. If the need relates to increased expenses, what is the nature of the expenses? Instead of increasing the biennial renewal fee, has the Board considered lowering expenses?