SENATE BILL REPORT
HB 1234

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 18, 2025

Title: An act relating to the mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers advisory committee.

Brief Description: Concerning the mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers advisory committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Simmons and Rule.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/6/25, 96-0.
Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/14/25, 3/18/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the one member of the Washington State Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Social Workers Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) who must be an advanced social worker, to be either an advanced social worker or an independent clinical social worker.
- Specifies that the prohibition against members of the Advisory Committee holding an office in a relevant professional association applies specifically to holding a governing office or board position.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.
Signed by Senators Cleveland, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Muzzall, Ranking Member; Bateman, Chapman, Christian, Harris, Holy, Riccelli, Robinson and Slatter.

Staff: Greg Attanasio (786-7410)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: The Washington State Mental Health Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Social Workers Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) is comprised of nine members. The members include two licensed mental health counselors, two marriage and family therapists, one independent clinical social worker, one advanced social worker, and three consumers. The members of the Advisory Committee are appointed by the secretary of the Department of Health (Secretary). Members of the Advisory Committee may not hold an office in a professional association for mental health, social work, or marriage and family therapy.

The Advisory Committee is charged with providing advice and assistance on licensing activities related to mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers, as requested by the Secretary. The responsibilities relate to rulemaking, case disposition guidelines related to unprofessional conduct, review of reports of unprofessional conduct or consumer complaints, consumer education, and continuing education and continuing competency programs.

Summary of Bill: The one member of the Advisory Committee that must be an advanced social worker may be either an advanced social worker or an independent clinical social worker.

The prohibition on members of the Advisory Committee holding an office in a relevant professional association applies specifically to holding a governing office or board position.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will help fill a vacancy on the committee by allowing an independent clinical social worker to serve on the committee. It will also allow those who volunteer with professional associations to still serve on the committee.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jeremy Arp, National Association of Social Workers - Washington Chapter.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.