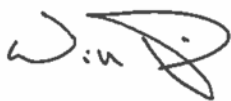


## **Statement by the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers in Response to the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners Change to the Social Work Code of Conduct**

The Texas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is outraged that the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) accepted language from the Governor of Texas removing protections against discrimination for disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and gender expression from the Social Work Code of Conduct. The Governor's office rationalizes this change by claiming that agency rules cannot be more expansive than what is in state law. However, the TSBSWE has the explicit statutory authority to propose and adopt rules regarding: "the scope of practice of and standards of care and ethical practice for social work." This includes defining anti-discrimination protections under the Code of Conduct. NASW/TX is greatly concerned that the removal of disability protections violates the law, and that the Governor overreached his authority in asking for the stripping away of LGBTQIA protections.

The Code of Conduct is the guide which serves as the foundation for the profession, and disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression should receive protected status. Social workers already have the ability to decline to provide services to a client based on their competencies and training, but they cannot discriminate based on selective personal values. And while removing this language does not allow a social worker to discriminate based on other state and federal statutes, especially in the area of disability, it could send the erroneous message that this is allowed. This might deter a client from coming in for services, or cause a social worker to withhold a service they are ethically obligated to provide.

NASW/TX calls on the Governor to rescind his overreach into the Code of Conduct for social workers, and encourages the Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC), the agency that houses the TSBSWE, to work with the board to reinstate these protections.



Will Francis, LMSW  
He/Him/His  
Executive Director  
National Association of Social Workers –  
Texas Chapter  
810 W. 11th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701  
512-474-1454  
[wfrancis.naswtx@socialworkers.org](mailto:wfrancis.naswtx@socialworkers.org)