October 26, 2020

The National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD), representing over 200 schools of social work around the country, strongly condemns the action by the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners on Oct. 12, 2020, which removed the rule prohibiting social workers from discriminating against clients based on the client’s sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability.

As educators, we prepare social work students to practice in an ethical manner, upholding our professional Code of Ethics. Section 4.02 of this Code specifically states “Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.” This change in rule, which facilitates and supports the discrimination against clients because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability, is a hateful act of discrimination and in direct violation of the Code of Ethics. Social workers on the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners may have seemingly violated the social work Code of Ethics simply by allowing this change in rule to occur without a period of public comment.

NADD fully endorses the statement from our national professional organizations, the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2244/National-Social-Work-Organizations-Oppose-Elimination-of-Texas-LGBTQ-and-Disability-Protections. We support their position that “Eliminating this rule is an unconscionable, stealth attempt to stifle progress toward full equality and minimizes the leadership social workers have demonstrated in advancing social justice.”

NADD fully condemns and rejects any possible efforts by other states’ Board of Social Work Examiners to engage in similar abhorrent behavior that would allow discrimination against a vulnerable group or population. We commit to ongoing work to fight all such actions, and we continue to dedicate ourselves to educating future generations of social workers who will respect the inherent dignity and worth of all people in their practice.

NADD Board of Directors

Martell Teasley, NADD Board President