

By Senator Rich

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to social workers; amending ss. 39.01 and 491.003, F.S.; defining the term "social worker"; creating s. 491.016, F.S.; prohibiting persons from identifying themselves as social workers unless they hold certain credentials; providing exceptions; requiring the Department of Health to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Present subsections (70) through (74) of section 39.01, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (71) through (75), respectively, and a new subsection (70) is added to that section, to read:

39.01 Definitions.--When used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

(70) "Social worker" means a person who holds a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in social work.

Section 2. Subsection (17) is added to section 491.003, Florida Statutes, to read:

491.003 Definitions.--As used in this chapter:

(17) "Social worker" means a person who holds a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in social work. A social worker must hold a license or certification issued pursuant to this chapter to conduct clinical social work.

Section 3. Section 491.016, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

491.016 Professional social workers; identification.--

1 (1) It is a misdemeanor of the first degree,
2 punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, for a
3 person, with or without compensation, to hold himself or
4 herself out to the public as a social worker, directly or
5 through an entity, unless that person:

6 (a) Holds at least a bachelor's or master's degree in
7 social work from a social work program accredited by the
8 Council of Social Work Education or from an institution that
9 is an active candidate for accreditation as a social work
10 program by that council; or

11 (b) Completes, at a university or college outside the
12 United States or Canada, a social work program determined by
13 the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council
14 on Social Work Education to be equivalent to a bachelor's or
15 master's degree in social work.

16 (2) This section does not apply to:

17 (a) Persons who, before July 1, 2006, used the title
18 "social worker" in their employment as long as they
19 continuously work for the same employer and in the same
20 capacity as they did before July 1, 2006; or

21 (b) Persons who are employed to provide social work
22 services under administrative supervision in long-term care
23 facilities licensed by the Agency of Health Care
24 Administration.

25 (3) The department shall adopt rules to administer
26 this section.

27 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Prohibits persons from identifying themselves as social workers unless they hold certain credentials. Provides exceptions for certain persons.