



604342

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

.  
. .  
. .  
. .  
. .

House

---

The Committee on Health Policy (Gruters) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. Subsections (1), (3), and (4) of section  
491.005, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

491.005 Licensure by examination.—

(1) CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK.—Upon verification of  
documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
board rule, ~~plus the actual per applicant cost to the department~~



604342

11 ~~for purchase of the examination from the American Association of~~  
12 ~~State Social Worker's Boards or a similar national organization,~~  
13 the department shall issue a license as a clinical social worker  
14 to an applicant whom ~~who~~ the board certifies has met all of the  
15 following criteria:

16 (a) ~~Has~~ Submitted an application and paid the appropriate  
17 fee.

18 (b)1. ~~Has~~ Received a doctoral degree in social work from a  
19 graduate school of social work which at the time the applicant  
20 graduated was accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by  
21 the United States Department of Education or ~~has~~ received a  
22 master's degree in social work from a graduate school of social  
23 work which at the time the applicant graduated:

24 a. Was accredited by the Council on Social Work Education;

25 b. Was accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of  
26 Social Work; or

27 c. Has been determined to have been a program equivalent to  
28 programs approved by the Council on Social Work Education by the  
29 Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on  
30 Social Work Education. An applicant who graduated from a program  
31 at a university or college outside of the United States or  
32 Canada must present documentation of the equivalency  
33 determination from the council in order to qualify.

34 2. The applicant's graduate program ~~must have~~ emphasized  
35 direct clinical patient or client health care services,  
36 including, but not limited to, coursework in clinical social  
37 work, psychiatric social work, medical social work, social  
38 casework, psychotherapy, or group therapy. The applicant's  
39 graduate program must have included all of the following



604342

40 coursework:

41 a. A supervised field placement which was part of the  
42 applicant's advanced concentration in direct practice, during  
43 which the applicant provided clinical services directly to  
44 clients.

45 b. Completion of 24 semester hours or 32 quarter hours in  
46 theory of human behavior and practice methods as courses in  
47 clinically oriented services, including a minimum of one course  
48 in psychopathology, and no more than one course in research,  
49 taken in a school of social work accredited or approved pursuant  
50 to subparagraph 1.

51 3. If the course title which appears on the applicant's  
52 transcript does not clearly identify the content of the  
53 coursework, the applicant provided ~~shall be required to provide~~  
54 additional documentation, including, but not limited to, a  
55 syllabus or catalog description published for the course.

56 (c) Completed ~~Has had~~ at least 2 years of clinical social  
57 work experience, which took place subsequent to completion of a  
58 graduate degree in social work at an institution meeting the  
59 accreditation requirements of this section, under the  
60 supervision of a licensed clinical social worker or the  
61 equivalent who is a qualified supervisor as determined by the  
62 board. An individual who intends to practice in Florida to  
63 satisfy clinical experience requirements must register pursuant  
64 to s. 491.0045 before commencing practice. If the applicant's  
65 graduate program was not a program which emphasized direct  
66 clinical patient or client health care services as described in  
67 subparagraph (b)2., the supervised experience requirement must  
68 take place after the applicant has completed a minimum of 15



604342

69 semester hours or 22 quarter hours of the coursework required. A  
70 doctoral internship may be applied toward the clinical social  
71 work experience requirement. A licensed mental health  
72 professional must be on the premises when clinical services are  
73 provided by a registered intern in a private practice setting.

74 (d) ~~Has~~ Passed a theory and practice examination designated  
75 by board rule ~~provided by the department for this purpose.~~

76 (e) ~~Has~~ Demonstrated, in a manner designated by board rule  
77 ~~of the board~~, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the  
78 practice of clinical social work, marriage and family therapy,  
79 and mental health counseling.

80 (3) MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY.—Upon verification of  
81 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
82 board rule, ~~plus the actual cost of the purchase of the~~  
83 ~~examination from the Association of Marital and Family Therapy~~  
84 ~~Regulatory Board, or similar national organization,~~ the  
85 department shall issue a license as a marriage and family  
86 therapist to an applicant who the board certifies has met all of  
87 the following criteria:

88 (a) ~~Has~~ Submitted an application and paid the appropriate  
89 fee.

90 (b) 1. Attained one of the following:

91 a. A minimum of a master's degree in marriage and family  
92 therapy from a program accredited by the Commission on  
93 Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

94 b. A minimum of a master's degree with a major emphasis in  
95 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field from a  
96 university program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of  
97 Counseling and Related Educational Programs and graduate courses



604342

98 approved by the board.

99 c. Has A minimum of a master's degree with an ~~major~~  
100 emphasis in marriage and family therapy or a closely related  
101 field, with a degree conferred before September 1, 2027, from an  
102 institutionally accredited college or university ~~from a program~~  
103 ~~accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and~~  
104 ~~Family Therapy Education or from a Florida university program~~  
105 ~~accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and~~  
106 ~~Related Educational Programs~~ and graduate courses approved by  
107 the board of ~~Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy,~~  
108 ~~and Mental Health Counseling.~~

109 2. If the course title that appears on the applicant's  
110 transcript does not clearly identify the content of the  
111 coursework, the applicant provided ~~shall provide~~ additional  
112 documentation, including, but not limited to, a syllabus or  
113 catalog description published for the course. The required  
114 master's degree must have been received in an institution of  
115 higher education that, at the time the applicant graduated, was  
116 fully accredited by an institutional ~~a regional~~ accrediting body  
117 recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or  
118 its successor organization ~~Commission on Recognition of~~  
119 ~~Postsecondary Accreditation~~ or was ~~publicly recognized~~ as a  
120 member in good standing with the Association of Universities and  
121 Colleges of Canada, or an institution of higher education  
122 located outside the United States and Canada which, at the time  
123 the applicant was enrolled and at the time the applicant  
124 graduated, maintained a standard of training substantially  
125 equivalent to the standards of training of those institutions in  
126 the United States which are accredited by an institutional ~~a~~



604342

127 ~~regional~~ accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher  
128 Education Accreditation or its successor organization ~~Commission~~  
129 ~~on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation~~. Such foreign  
130 education and training must have been received in an institution  
131 or program of higher education officially recognized by the  
132 government of the country in which it is located as an  
133 institution or program to train students to practice as  
134 professional marriage and family therapists or psychotherapists.  
135 The applicant has the burden of establishing that the  
136 requirements of this provision have been met, and the board  
137 shall require documentation, such as an evaluation by a foreign  
138 equivalency determination service, as evidence that the  
139 applicant's graduate degree program and education were  
140 equivalent to an accredited program in this country. An  
141 applicant with a master's degree from a program that did not  
142 emphasize marriage and family therapy may complete the  
143 coursework requirement in a training institution fully  
144 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and  
145 Family Therapy Education recognized by the United States  
146 Department of Education.

147 (c) Completed ~~Has had~~ at least 2 years of clinical  
148 experience during which 50 percent of the applicant's clients  
149 were receiving marriage and family therapy services, which must  
150 be at the post-master's level under the supervision of a  
151 licensed marriage and family therapist with at least 5 years of  
152 experience, or the equivalent, who is a qualified supervisor as  
153 determined by the board. An individual who intends to practice  
154 in Florida to satisfy the clinical experience requirements must  
155 register pursuant to s. 491.0045 before commencing practice. If



604342

156 a graduate has a master's degree with a major emphasis in  
157 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field which did  
158 not include all of the coursework required by paragraph (b),  
159 credit for the post-master's level clinical experience may not  
160 commence until the applicant has completed a minimum of 10 of  
161 the courses required by paragraph (b), as determined by the  
162 board, and at least 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours of the  
163 course credits must have been completed in the area of marriage  
164 and family systems, theories, or techniques. Within the 2 years  
165 of required experience, the applicant shall provide direct  
166 individual, group, or family therapy and counseling to cases  
167 including those involving unmarried dyads, married couples,  
168 separating and divorcing couples, and family groups that include  
169 children. A doctoral internship may be applied toward the  
170 clinical experience requirement. A licensed mental health  
171 professional must be on the premises when clinical services are  
172 provided by a registered intern in a private practice setting.

173 (d) ~~Has~~ Passed a theory and practice examination designated  
174 by board rule ~~provided by the department.~~

175 (e) ~~Has~~ Demonstrated, in a manner designated by board rule,  
176 knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of  
177 clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental  
178 health counseling.

179  
180 For the purposes of dual licensure, the department shall license  
181 as a marriage and family therapist any person who meets the  
182 requirements of s. 491.0057. Fees for dual licensure may not  
183 exceed those stated in this subsection.

184 (4) MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING.—Upon verification of



604342

185 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
186 board rule, ~~plus the actual per applicant cost of purchase of~~  
187 ~~the examination from the National Board for Certified Counselors~~  
188 ~~or its successor organization,~~ the department shall issue a  
189 license as a mental health counselor to an applicant who the  
190 board certifies has met all of the following criteria:

191 (a) ~~Has~~ Submitted an application and paid the appropriate  
192 fee.

193 (b)1. Attained ~~Has~~ a minimum of an earned master's degree  
194 from a mental health counseling program accredited by the  
195 Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related  
196 Educational Programs which consists of at least 60 semester  
197 hours or 80 quarter hours of clinical and didactic instruction,  
198 including a course in human sexuality and a course in substance  
199 abuse. If the master's degree is earned from a program related  
200 to the practice of mental health counseling which is not  
201 accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling  
202 and Related Educational Programs, then the coursework and  
203 practicum, internship, or fieldwork must consist of at least 60  
204 semester hours or 80 quarter hours and meet all of the following  
205 requirements:

206 a. Thirty-three semester hours or 44 quarter hours of  
207 graduate coursework, which must include a minimum of 3 semester  
208 hours or 4 quarter hours of graduate-level coursework in each of  
209 the following 11 content areas: counseling theories and  
210 practice; human growth and development; diagnosis and treatment  
211 of psychopathology; human sexuality; group theories and  
212 practice; individual evaluation and assessment; career and  
213 lifestyle assessment; research and program evaluation; social





604342

214 and cultural foundations; substance abuse; and legal, ethical,  
215 and professional standards issues in the practice of mental  
216 health counseling. Courses in research, thesis or dissertation  
217 work, practicums, internships, or fieldwork may not be applied  
218 toward this requirement.

219       b. A minimum of 3 semester hours or 4 quarter hours of  
220 graduate-level coursework addressing diagnostic processes,  
221 including differential diagnosis and the use of the current  
222 diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the American  
223 Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of  
224 Mental Disorders. The graduate program must have emphasized the  
225 common core curricular experience.

226       c. The equivalent, as determined by the board, of at least  
227 700 hours of university-sponsored supervised clinical practicum,  
228 internship, or field experience that includes at least 280 hours  
229 of direct client services, as required in the accrediting  
230 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and  
231 Related Educational Programs for mental health counseling  
232 programs. This experience may not be used to satisfy the post-  
233 master's clinical experience requirement.

234       2. ~~Has~~ Provided additional documentation if a course title  
235 that appears on the applicant's transcript does not clearly  
236 identify the content of the coursework. The documentation must  
237 include, but is not limited to, a syllabus or catalog  
238 description published for the course.

239  
240 Education and training in mental health counseling must have  
241 been received in an institution of higher education that, at the  
242 time the applicant graduated, was fully accredited by an



604342

243 institutional ~~a regional~~ accrediting body recognized by the  
244 Council for Higher Education Accreditation or its successor  
245 organization or was ~~publicly recognized as~~ a member in good  
246 standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of  
247 Canada, or an institution of higher education located outside  
248 the United States and Canada which, at the time the applicant  
249 was enrolled and at the time the applicant graduated, maintained  
250 a standard of training substantially equivalent to the standards  
251 of training of those institutions in the United States which are  
252 accredited by an institutional ~~a regional~~ accrediting body  
253 recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or  
254 its successor organization. Such foreign education and training  
255 must have been received in an institution or program of higher  
256 education officially recognized by the government of the country  
257 in which it is located as an institution or program to train  
258 students to practice as mental health counselors. The applicant  
259 has the burden of establishing that the requirements of this  
260 provision have been met, and the board shall require  
261 documentation, such as an evaluation by a foreign equivalency  
262 determination service, as evidence that the applicant's graduate  
263 degree program and education were equivalent to an accredited  
264 program in this country. Beginning July 1, 2025, an applicant  
265 must have a master's degree from a program that is accredited by  
266 the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related  
267 Educational Programs, the Masters in Psychology and Counseling  
268 Accreditation Council, or an equivalent accrediting body which  
269 consists of at least 60 semester hours or 80 quarter hours to  
270 apply for licensure under this paragraph.

271 (c) Completed ~~Has had~~ at least 2 years of clinical



604342

272 experience in mental health counseling, which must be at the  
273 post-master's level under the supervision of a licensed mental  
274 health counselor or the equivalent who is a qualified supervisor  
275 as determined by the board. An individual who intends to  
276 practice in Florida to satisfy the clinical experience  
277 requirements must register pursuant to s. 491.0045 before  
278 commencing practice. If a graduate has a master's degree with a  
279 major related to the practice of mental health counseling which  
280 did not include all the coursework required under sub-  
281 subparagraphs (b)1.a. and b., credit for the post-master's level  
282 clinical experience may not commence until the applicant has  
283 completed a minimum of seven of the courses required under sub-  
284 subparagraphs (b)1.a. and b., as determined by the board, one of  
285 which must be a course in psychopathology or abnormal  
286 psychology. A doctoral internship may be applied toward the  
287 clinical experience requirement. A licensed mental health  
288 professional must be on the premises when clinical services are  
289 provided by a registered intern in a private practice setting.

290 (d) ~~Has~~ Passed a theory and practice examination designated  
291 by board rule ~~provided by the department for this purpose.~~

292 (e) ~~Has~~ Demonstrated, in a manner designated by board rule,  
293 knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of  
294 clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental  
295 health counseling.

296 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

297  
298 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

299 And the title is amended as follows:

300 Delete everything before the enacting clause



604342

301 and insert:

302                                   A bill to be entitled  
303           An act relating to mental health professional  
304           licensure; amending s. 491.005, F.S.; revising  
305           licensure requirements for clinical social workers,  
306           marriage and family therapists, and mental health  
307           counselors; providing an effective date.