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## BC SOCIAL WORKERS CONCERNED ABOUT SCOPE OF LEGISLATION RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

(Vancouver) BC's professional social work association welcomes the BC government's efforts to streamline credential evaluations of foreign-trained social workers, however they urge that caution must be used to ensure the public interest is fully protected.

"There are many vacant social work positions across British Columbia in every health and social sector" said Michael Crawford, President of the BC Association of Social Workers. "This legislation has the potential to speed up entry to the profession and bring more fairness to the process."

The Act creates a superintendent's office that may direct regulatory bodies to comply with general standards, guidelines, and timelines created by that office. Failure to comply may result in the superintendent directly intervening in the operation of the regulatory college.

"The authority given to the superintendent under the Act seems excessive," said Crawford. "We would prefer that the post-secondary ministry consult with regulatory bodies and create a process that best fits that profession and workforce needs".

Regulatory colleges create codes of ethics and standards of practice to protect the public and these colleges operate under legislation administered by ministers in Health and Children and Family Development. When there is a conflict between the proposed Act and other legislation, it is this Act, aiming to streamline the approval of foreign-trained professionals that will prevail.

"Regulatory colleges protect the public interest and when a superintendent situated in another ministry is able to direct the regulatory college and even rewrite bylaws, how can the public be assured that public protection is still a priority?" said Crawford. "We hope the government will reconsider the heavy-handedness of some sections of this proposed legislation."

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The BC Association of Social Workers is a voluntary, not-for-profit membership association that supports and promotes the profession of social work and advocates for social justice. BCASW is one of the provincial/territorial social work associations in partnership with the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW). Through CASW we support the work of the International Federation of Social Workers. BCASW was incorporated in 1956 and has branches and members (including students) throughout BC.

*BCASW acknowledge that we work in the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and that our members and colleagues live, work, and play in unceded territories across British Columbia. We appreciate and acknowledge Métis and Inuit peoples across British Columbia.*