SB2222 SA1 is a bill that introduces two key initiatives aimed at supporting the education and training of social work students in Illinois. These initiatives are designed to provide financial grants to both school social workers and all other specialty social work students who are in need of economic assistance to complete their educational programs.

Initiatives Introduced by SB2222 SA1:
1. School-Based Grant Program:
   - Administered by: Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
   - Purpose: To establish a grant program specifically tailored for schools, providing financial assistance to students pursuing school social work

2. University-Based Grant Program:
   - Administered by: Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
   - Purpose: To institute a grant program aimed at universities, supporting social work students not covered under the school-based program, especially those in need of economic aid.

Funding: Both programs are subject to appropriations.

Why Is It Needed?
- Social work is one of the few health professions that often does not include paid field placements, making it challenging for economically disadvantaged students to complete their programs. SB2222 SA1 addresses this gap by providing grants that enable these students to pursue their education without the burden of financial constraints.
- By offering support to a broader spectrum of students, SB2222 SA1 aims to nurture a workforce that is reflective of society's diversity. This inclusive approach enriches the profession with varied perspectives and experiences, empowering social workers to effectively respond to the diverse needs of the populations they serve.
- Investing in the education of social work students through these field placement grant programs contributes to the long-term sustainability of the workforce. Graduates who are less burdened by financial debt are more likely to complete their programs and enter into the profession, thereby helping to address current workforce shortages in Illinois.

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