



**Testimony of Keith Buckhout - The Council of State Governments
Before the Senate of Maryland
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Senate Bill 0027 – The Cosmetology Licensure Compact
Position: Informational Only
Thursday, January 25, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and Committee members. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to address the committee. And thank you to Senator Gile for her interest in the Cosmetology Licensure Compact. My name is Keith Buckhout, and I am a Research Associate for the Council of State Governments.

The Council of State Governments is the nation's only national membership organization serving all three branches of state government and throughout our history we've promoted multi-state problem solving and supported states in determining their respective futures. This led CSG to create the National Center for Interstate Compacts. The Compacts Center serves as an information clearinghouse, a provider of training and technical assistance and a primary facilitator for assisting states with the revision and creation of new interstate compacts.

My testimony today concerns the Cosmetology Licensure Compact and is intended to inform the committee about the policies contained in the compact legislation.

In 2020 the Department of Defense entered into a cooperative agreement with CSG to fund the development of new interstate compacts for occupational licensure and the cosmetology profession was selected through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Between March 2021 and December 2022, CSG and our project partner, the Future of the Beauty Industry Coalition (FBIC), convened subject matter experts including state licensure board officials, legal counsel, industry professional associations, employers, licensees and cosmetology educators to study state policies, identify best practices, determine the needs of the profession and draft the model legislation. We were fortunate to have Nicole Fletcher, Executive Director of Maryland's Board of Cosmetology, on the Technical Assistance Group. CSG and FBIC also hosted public review sessions until all public input and feedback was heard to ensure the legislation before you today contains comprehensive policies developed through an open, transparent and thorough process.

The purpose of this compact is to create an additional, optional, alternative pathway to multistate practice by allowing cosmetologists whose license is in good standing to apply for a multistate license in their home state. Under this "mutual recognition" model of interstate practice, compact member states agree to "recognize" the multistate license issued by the home state as authorizing practice of cosmetology within their jurisdiction. The intent is that the multistate license functions like a driver's license. The home state issues the license, and it authorizes practice in any other state that is a member of the compact.



To be eligible to join the Cosmetology Licensure Compact, a state must:

- License and regulate cosmetology.
- Require that applicants for licensure pass a cosmetology competency examination.
- Require that applicants for licensure satisfy educational or training requirements in cosmetology.
- Implement and maintain procedures for considering one or more of the following categories of information from applicants: criminal history, license disciplinary history, or background check.

From a regulatory perspective, the Cosmetology Licensure Compact preserves the authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. Any cosmetologist using the compact to provide services in Maryland must abide by Maryland's scope of practice rules. If a multistate licensee from another member state violates Maryland's laws and rules while providing cosmetology services within its borders, that licensee can be disciplined and prohibited from practicing in Maryland in the future. Maryland also retains authority over initial licensing requirements.

Just like the seven occupational licensure compacts Maryland has already joined, this compact will be governed by a commission consisting of a delegate appointed by each member state. The commission's authority only extends to effectively administering the purposes in the compact. It cannot dictate licensing policy to states.

We don't anticipate substantial additional costs for states participating in the Cosmetology Licensure Compact. There may be a small assessment for additional software required to connect to the Compact's interstate licensure data system as well as cost(s) associated with the attendance of your state's chosen delegate to the annual in-person Commission meeting once the Compact is enacted in seven states.

As Maryland is a state with several major military installations, it is important to note there is a provision allowing active military members and their spouses additional licensure mobility to ensure the compact meets the specific needs of highly mobile military families.

At this time the Cosmetology Licensure Compact has been enacted in Alabama, Arizona and Kentucky. Legislation to enact the compact has also been filed in California, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this hearing and share information about the compact. I would be happy to address any questions from the committee.