



Maryland Counseling Association, Inc. is a Branch of the American Counseling Association
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The Honorable Senator Katherine Klausmeier
Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY FOR SB409** – Health Occupations – Clinical Marriage and Family Therapists – Reciprocal Licensure Requirements

Dear Senator Klausmeier,

Our organization appreciates that the Finance Committee is considering the issue of reciprocity in the state of Maryland. The Maryland Counseling Association (MCA) continues to engage with our state elected officials who represent our clients as well as members of our professional body. Our membership covers all counties throughout the state of Maryland with 500 members and counting.

The state requirements for licensure from the board are detailed to protect those seeking services as well as to ensure that professionals meet specific qualifications needed to provide high quality care. The process of evaluating eligibility for licensure is rigorous and thoughtful, and should remain consistent across the behavioral health professions. This produces clarity, fairness, and equal credentialing, which assists the public in trusting the foundations of the professional licensure.

This current bill raises concerns for professionals acquiring Maryland licensure for Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) through reciprocity. There are states who have lesser requirements to issue the MFT license than Maryland. Thus, waiving Maryland requirements in favor of reciprocity may devalue the licensure of professionals who

complete the entire licensing process in Maryland. Additionally, the proposed waiver is incongruent with the Counseling Compact for Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors, which establishes baseline requirements for counselors to have license portability across state lines. The Counseling Compact lays the groundwork for additional behavioral health license portability and upholds practices of other professional health license portability.

We do not support the waiver of the Maryland state requirements for licensure of Marriage and Family Therapists who hold a license in another state. We recommend reciprocity equivalency requirements.

Sincerely,

Kerri

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