

**To:** Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

**From:** Maria F. Smith, LCSW-C

**Re:** HB0034 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

**Position: Favorable with Amendments**

February 1, 2024

Good Afternoon Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maria F. Smith (she/her). I am a Maryland resident currently living in Rockville, Maryland (District 18) who was born & raised in College Park (District 21). I have been a licensed social worker in the State of Maryland since 2016. I have worked as a direct social service provider and mental health therapist. At times, I have also been licensed in Washington, DC, though the cost of renewing my license in both Maryland and DC every other year has made it hard to sustain licensure in both places.

In theory, I support HB0034, cross-filed as SB0204. The Social Work Interstate Compact appears to make it easier for social workers to work across state lines. As a telehealth therapist, this could benefit me by opening up my list of potential clients seeking services within my niche. However, the legislation as currently written, continues to uphold our profession's biased national exams, further harming marginalized social workers and the communities they represent & serve. Before looking to expand our reach as licensed social workers, and before seeking out support from other states, might we first look inward and find ways to support Maryland social workers who are already here in our local communities?

I support **HB0034 with Amendments**. I ask that you seek council and consideration from members of the **Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure** before passing this legislation.

Sincerely,

Maria F. Smith, MSW, LCSW-C  
Rockville, Maryland  
District 18