

TO: The Honorable Joselyn Pena-Melnyk, Chair and Members, House
Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Daphne McClellan, PhD, LMSW
DATE: February 1, 2024
RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 34 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

I am writing in support of House Bill 34 which would cause the state of Maryland “to enter into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold interstate compact licenses to practice social work in member states; establishing requirements for multistate licensure; establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; and providing for withdrawal from the Compact.”

During the past twenty years, I have taught social work at UMBC and UMB, I have served as the Executive Director of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and also as Executive Director of the Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE). These positions have given me a great deal of insight into the need for social work services by Maryland citizens, the needs of social workers in our state, and the cumbersome and expensive licensing process for those social workers whose work requires them to be licensed in multiple states.

This legislation would allow licensed Maryland social workers to have the same opportunity to practice across state lines as many other healthcare professionals in our state for whom compacts have already been approved. The compact would increase mobility and work satisfaction for our practitioners while providing continuity of care for clients. It would also allow compact members from other states to provide services in Maryland, thus increasing the available workforce to Maryland citizens in need of social work services.

Situated as we are, sandwiched between Virginia, D.C., Pennsylvania and Delaware, we have many social workers who must maintain multiple licenses. A compact would make this process much easier, less expensive and much more uniform, while continuing to guarantee protection of the public. It would also serve the important goal of making licensure easier for our very mobile service members and their spouses.

Currently there are thousands of out-of-state social workers who are licensed in Maryland. These social workers and those coming behind them, applying for licenses, add to the enormous workload for the staff of the BSWE. Making the process easier for the social workers will also reduce the workload for our understaffed board.

As you are aware, a Workgroup has been meeting to consider whether changes are necessary to the social work licensing process in Maryland. Voting in favor of this compact would not negate or hinder the work of that group in any way. It would simply serve the purposes of the compact and those Maryland citizens who would certainly benefit from it.

Thank you for consideration. I ask for a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 34**.

