

**SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 034
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Health and Government Operations Committee
January 30, 2024
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Bonnie Cullison Rosapepe, and House and Health and Government Operations Committee members. I am Derrick Whiting, representing the collective voice of **Social Work Advocates for Social Change**, a passionate graduate student coalition at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. On behalf of our organization, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for House Bill 034.

Many individuals pursuing careers in social work have faced daunting challenges when seeking licensure across different states. Prior to the introduction of this groundbreaking legislation, the process was often arduous and hindered the professional mobility of social workers. Many dedicated individuals faced unnecessary barriers, including complicated application procedures, disparate licensing requirements, and lengthy waiting periods.

The difficulties in navigating the licensure requirements in various states have adversely affected numerous aspiring social workers, leading to delays in their ability to practice in their desired locations. This not only impedes their professional growth but also limits the ability of qualified social workers to address critical needs in communities where their skills are in demand.

House Bill 034 is a crucial step forward in addressing these longstanding issues by establishing a multistate compact for social work practice. The commission created by the bill ensures that the collective challenges faced by countless individuals are acknowledged and addressed, fostering a more streamlined and efficient process for licensure recognition.

One of the significant impacts of this legislation is its potential to alleviate the burden on social workers who often had to undergo additional training or examination processes when moving to a new state. The six-month recognition period for licenses after the termination of a state's participation provides a crucial transitional period, allowing social workers to continue their practice while adapting to changes in licensure requirements.

The establishment of a coordinated data system, as outlined in the bill, is particularly noteworthy. The sharing of information related to licensure and adverse actions enhances transparency and accountability within our profession. This not only benefits social workers but also contributes to the protection and well-being of the individuals and communities we serve.

In conclusion, House Bill 034 is a beacon of progress for the social work profession, addressing the challenges that many aspiring social workers have faced in obtaining licensure across different states. **Social Work Advocates for Social Change** wholeheartedly supports this legislation, recognizing its potential to advance our profession, enhance professional mobility, and ultimately better serve those in need.

I urge you to issue a favorable report for HB 034.



For more information, please contact

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Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.