

**Health and Government Operations Committee  
February 1, 2024**

**House Bill 34  
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact  
\*\*\*SUPPORT\*\*\***

To the Honorable Health and Government Operations Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) - Maryland Chapter. Founded in 1955, The National Association of Social Workers is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance social policies.

**We at the National Association of Social Workers would like to express our enthusiastic support for HB 34, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, sponsored by Delegate Kerr.**

The NASW - Maryland Chapter represents the interests of social workers across our state, advocating for their professional development, ethical practice, and the highest standards of care for the individuals and communities we serve. According to 5.01 “Integrity of the Profession” section (a), the NASW code of ethics states that “social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice”. We believe that the proposed Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact aligns with our commitment to enhancing the profession and ensuring that social workers can effectively and efficiently provide services across state lines.

The compact, as outlined in the bill, addresses a critical need by authorizing regulated social workers who hold interstate compact licenses to practice social work in member states. This provision not only streamlines the licensure process for practitioners but also ensures that individuals in need of social work services can access qualified professionals, irrespective of state boundaries. Other benefits include:

- Enhancing the mobility of social workers
- Improving access to professional social work services
- Improving continuity of care when clients travel or relocate

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- Supporting relocating military spouses and families
- Enhancing public safety
- Creating a data system of information about licensees including license status, investigative information, and adverse actions

Establishing requirements for multistate licensure is a commendable effort to standardize and simplify the process for social workers seeking to practice in multiple jurisdictions. This will contribute to the overall efficiency of our profession and facilitate the timely delivery of essential services to those who depend on the expertise of social workers.

We appreciate the foresight demonstrated in the creation of the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission. This commission will play a pivotal role in maintaining high standards of practice, addressing emerging challenges, and fostering collaboration among member states. It represents a significant step towards ensuring consistency and accountability in the implementation of the compact.

In the NASW code of ethics, our second ethical standard under *the Social Workers' Ethical Responsibility to Clients* section states that "Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals." For the National Association of Social Workers, our clients are our fellow social workers. By supporting this compact, we are supporting our clients' right to self-determination by ensuring that there are multiple options to choose from. Without options, we are without choice.

The NASW - Maryland Chapter fully endorses the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact and urges the committee to support this important legislation. We believe that its passage will not only benefit social workers but, more importantly, will enhance the quality of care and support available to individuals and families in need. **We ask that you give a favorable report to HB 34.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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