



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
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DATE: February 1, 2024
BILL NO: House Bill 34
BILL TITLE: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 34 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 34 facilitates interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving access to competent social work services. Under this bill, regulated social workers who hold or are eligible for an active, unencumbered license in the home state are eligible to practice social work in member states. Additionally, this legislation establishes a Licensure Compact Commission comprised of one delegate selected by the member state’s licensing authority, defines the role and voting rights of the Commission including disciplinary authority and provides a mechanism for withdrawing from the compact.

Background:

Twenty health occupation boards share responsibility for licensing health practitioners in Maryland. With a few exceptions, an individual must be licensed, certified, registered or permitted by the respective health occupation board before practicing in the State. Requirements for licensure, certification, registration and permitting vary by profession but typically require a combination of approved education, experience, examination, and a criminal history background check.

Currently, Maryland does not offer licensure reciprocity with other states for social workers. However, if you are licensed by another state, you may be able to obtain a Maryland social work license by endorsement. To be eligible, an applicant must hold a social work license that is equivalent to one offered by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (Board) and have passed an exam to receive that license. Documentation must be provided to the Board for applicants who have been licensed and practicing for at least 1,000 per year for the last 10 and more extensive documentation is required by the Board if an applicant does not meet those criteria.

Rationale:

Passage of this bill will allow Maryland to improve access to licensure and licensure portability for social workers and meet the qualifications and definition of a military family-friendly state within the Department of Defense’s (DoD) Support of Military Families scorecard for states. These scorecards factor into future DoD basing decisions. The economic impact of Maryland’s military installations in FY 2021 was \$61.4B in payroll and expenditures. With 72% of military

families living off-base in our communities, this bill will allow not only the ease of military families gaining employment but also contributing to the overall quality of life for all Marylanders by increasing the availability of licensed social workers in our communities.

In addition to license portability, DoD also strongly encourages states to adopt interstate compacts for occupational licensure. Maryland has adopted seven of the nine interstate licensure compacts related to health occupations. The EMS and the Advanced Practice Medical Nurse compacts are the remaining ones in need of adoption. In 2024, additional interstate licensure compacts for health occupations will be introduced to include dietitians, school psychologists and respiratory therapists. Passage of HB 34 will allow for a more straightforward adoption of these interstate compacts.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 34.