

TO: The Honorable Joselyn Pena-Melnyk, Chair Members, House
Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Ken Kerr

FROM: Carolyn Miller, LCSW-C

DATE: February 1, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 34 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Chairperson Pena-Melnyk and Distinguished Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

Thank you for considering my written statement in full support of House Bill 34 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. My name is Carolyn Miller, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing in Calvert County, Maryland and practicing in both Montgomery County, MD and Washington, District of Columbia.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the fact that I practice in two jurisdictions, each requiring their own mandatory bi-annual fees and continuing education requirements. There is a significant demand for mental health services, nation-wide, and a limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability, and decreases licensure burden, for practitioners. Simultaneously, it empowers state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information.

The Social Work Compact brings numerous benefits for social workers, as well as a positive impact for those requiring critical mental health support. This is demonstrated through, but not limited to, the following points:

1. Facilitating mobility for social workers meeting uniform licensure requirements.
2. Expanding access to care for clients.
3. Ensuring continuity of care for clients and social workers during relocations or travel across state lines.
4. Simplifying the maintenance of certifications for military personnel and their spouses during relocations.
5. Safeguarding and strengthening the existing system of state licensure.

Notably, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact preserves each state's authority to regulate the profession. It does not alter the scope of practice or affect state practice laws.

Social workers operating under the Compact must continue to adhere to the laws and rules of the state where they practice, including compliance with the state's scope of practice.

Please, I urge you to lend your support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, recognizing its potential to make a transformative impact on mental health service accessibility and continuity of care, as well as lessen the burden in an already challenging career field.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Miller', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Carolyn Miller
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)
Calvert County, Maryland