



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

**WES MOORE
GOVERNOR**

**ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR**

**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 34 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Chairwoman Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs supports HB 34 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

This proposed legislation will empower many Marylanders, especially our military spouses. According to the national non-profit Blue Star Families, military spouse unemployment stands at 21%, an unacceptable level that has been static for too many years. Additionally, 600,000 military and veteran families move around the nation and the world every year, uprooting their lives in service of our country. Many move to Maryland with skills and talents that we should be harnessing.

House Bill 34 enables licensed social workers to continue practicing their skills here in Maryland, provided that they are already licensed in their previous state and that that state is also part of the Compact. This change would have an enormous impact on our military spouses who are social workers, allowing them to seamlessly integrate into our Maryland communities and minimize disruptions to their professional life between moves. Additionally, the Compact could benefit Maryland's fiscal health by ensuring these families can thrive economically here in the state.

Military families, like all families, increasingly need to be two-income households to thrive and achieve the American Dream. Thriving military families are essential to retaining veterans to continue living here in Maryland. HB 34 goes some way toward making that goal possible.

I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact to help our state's military spouses.

THE WINELAND BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR
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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'W'.

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary