

Mary Graham, LCSW-C

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

DATE: January 27, 2024

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

I am in support of this Bill because it will allow mental health providers to offer consistent and available services to their clients in whatever state they may be. I currently see a client who experiences severe depression, she will be traveling to be with family in another state, because we may meet virtually she had assumed she could carry on seeing me while she is with her family. Unfortunately under the current rules this will not be possible. Without detailing her trauma, this will make her visit to her family very much more difficult.

Social workers who work in areas near adjoining states must currently be licensed in all states that share borders. In Frederick County the Pennsylvania border is close by, West Virginia shares a boundary with Washington County. I am aware of clients who move back and forth to be with family members, which means that therapy sessions must be curtailed unless the therapist is licensed in the adjoining state. The process of obtaining a license is time consuming and expensive.

Given the need for mental health services and the availability of virtual connections it is even more important that those who seek to both provide and receive care not be hindered by this licensing rule. Our exam is a national exam, why must each state make their own rules about licensing? I have a driver's license from Maryland, and I am able to drive my car in every state! It is time. Please support House Bill 34.

Thank you.