

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

FROM: Janet Svirsky, LMSW, LGSW

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:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting House Bill 34 on the " Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Janet Svirsky, an LGSW, practicing in DC, and an LMSW practicing in Maryland, residing in Montgomery County Maryland, on the path to becoming an LCSW-C.

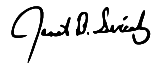
The importance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact cannot be overstated. In my view, as clearly amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ability to practice wherever the client resides as a result of relocation, travel, illness, support of family, ..., allowing for the ethical continuity of care, or the lack of services where they live, together with the continued ability to practice using telehealth, allows for the ethical support for those in need. The bill addresses concerns around any formal discrepancy between states' standards of competency, including the possibility of a national exam, and continued education requirements, nor does it weaken each state's ability to regulate. The location of the client has no relevance to the competence of the therapist.

There is a great deal of experience in the use of licensure compacts in other fields that should inspire confidence that it can be done appropriately, such as for nurses, physical therapists, physicians, as well as for other mental health practitioners, psychologists, and counselors. While, in general, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners while empowering state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information, it is particularly relevant to those who practice in Maryland, DC, and Virginia, should they all join the compact, who now have to be licensed in three states to practice within a relatively small geographic area.

Please 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.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet D. Svirsky".

Janet Svirsky, LMSW, LGSW

Montgomery County, Maryland