



February 16, 2021

The Honorable Senator Paul Pinsky, Chairperson
EHEA Committee
Maryland Senate
11 Bladen Street
Room 2, West Wing
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT FOR SB 571** – Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact

Dear Chairperson Pinsky and Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs:

I want to thank you for taking my written statement of support for SB 571 on the “Counseling Compact” to be entered into the public hearing record. My name is Carol ZA McGinnis and I am an Associate Professor and Licensed Professional Counselor who resides and practices in Baltimore County, Maryland.

This Compact is important to me because I understand how difficult it can be to find help that is needed by my fellow citizens. Many times, a client may be in need of immediate services and the wait time for an in-State practitioner can be much too long given the seriousness of their symptoms. Allowing for the services across state lines provides our licensed professional counselors with the opportunity to help in other states, and will give our citizens increased access to counseling that is sorely needed now and in the foreseeable future.

Much like existing licensure compacts for nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists and EMS personnel, the Counseling Compact will increase licensure portability for practitioners while allowing state regulatory boards to better protect consumers through enhanced sharing of licensure information.

The Counseling Compact will benefit those in need of critical lifesaving mental health support and counselors by:

- Enhancing mobility for counselors who meet uniform licensure requirements;
- Increasing access to care for clients;
- Ensuring continuity of care when clients or counselors relocate or travel to other states;
- Allowing military personnel and spouses to easily maintain certifications when relocating;
- Preserving and strengthening the current system of state licensure.

The Counseling Compact preserves each state’s authority to regulate the profession. It does not alter scope of practice or impact state practice law. Counselors utilizing the Compact must abide by the laws and rules of the state in which they are practicing, including adhering to that state’s scope of practice.

As president of the Maryland Counseling Association (MCA), I represent the will of professionals who work and live in the state of Maryland and strongly urge you to support this Counseling Compact.

Sincerely,

Carol ZA McGinnis PhD, SIP, BC-TMH, NCC, LCPC
2020-2021 Maryland Counseling Association (MCA) President
president@mdcounseling.org