

February 18, 2021

The Honorable Del. Shane Pendergrass, Chairperson
Health and Government Operations
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St. RM 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT FOR HB 736** – Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass and Distinguished Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

I want to thank you for taking my written statement of support for HB 736 on the “Counseling Compact” to be entered into the public hearing record. My name is Danielle LaSure-Bryant and I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor who resides and practices in Prince George’s County, Maryland.

This Compact is important to me because I believe it would induce greater continuity in client care. I am a mental health clinician practicing in higher education. Telebehavioral health modalities quickly became a lifeline for anxious and isolated students during the COVID-19 pandemic. For in-state students, the ability to pivot to telebehavioral health was a seamless task. However, I had to terminate mental health services when individuals were forced to relocate out of state. The forced termination of clinical services was disruptive and distressing for students. The Counseling Compact would prevent forced terminations and allow students and other individuals to stay in treatment without disruption.

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.

I strongly urge you to support this Counseling Compact.

Sincerely,

Danielle LaSure-Bryant, EdD, LCPC
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
Secretary-elect, Maryland Counseling Association
200 Surrey Circle Drive, Fort Washington, MD 20744