



Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work

Testimony on SB 204 – Social Work Licensure Compact

Maryland Senate Finance Committee

February, 2024

I thank the committee for the opportunity to share our strong support for Senate Bill 204. I am Judith Gallant and represent both the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) and the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA). The Society includes clinical social workers practicing in the three jurisdictions of the DMV. The CSWA is a nationwide umbrella association of state-based clinical social work societies.

A most frequently voiced concern by our members is the current roadblock in providing continuity of mental health care to patients who move out of state. Imagine this: my patient needs to move to Virginia to care for an elderly parent. I am not licensed in Virginia and I would currently be unable to continue to work with this patient unless they traveled back to MD for every session. Were my patient – at a time of great stress – cut off from the ongoing care I provide, they could experience a deterioration of their underlying condition, especially if the patient suffered from Major Depressive Disorder.

Our National organization hears concerns about this from its members throughout our country. Without this Social Work Compact becoming law, patients have unnecessary roadblocks to access continuing care from a trusted provider.

Another benefit: With Maryland in the Social Work Compact, social-worker spouses of our military members who need to relocate when the service member is reassigned to another state are given the ability to maintain a stable income from their profession without needing to become re-licensed in the new state.

Some are asking that passage be delayed until the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure complete their work. It is important to understand that a state or jurisdiction has their own requirements for a social work license. The Social Work Compact has its own requirements for someone to become licensed as part of the Compact. These are *two separate licenses*. An applicant for the Compact must have the State license, but the Compact does *not* have requirements for what the State's qualifications must be.

We urge a favorable report from this Committee and a speedy passage by the General Assembly. If Maryland is one of the first seven states to pass the compact, it will have a strong voice in setting the rules.

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