

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 204 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact - POSITION:  
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 204 (SB 204). With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, we empower Marylanders to reach their full potential by providing preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to workforce development and career opportunities. SB 204 impacts resources available to the Social Services Administration (SSA) to implement Child Protective Services (CPS) and our Foster Care programs, as well as our Family Preservation Services preventing the need for foster care.

SB 204 would adopt the Model Social Work Licensure Compact, making Maryland a participant in the Compact. The Compact would authorize Maryland licensed social workers who hold multistate compact licenses to practice social work in other Compact member states. For Maryland, a multistate licensing pathway would increase license portability by permitting a Maryland social worker to practice in multiple states without having to apply for full licensure in another state that participates in the compact. For example, currently, a Maryland licensed social worker conducting a safety assessment for a Maryland child placed with kin in the District of Columbia must also be licensed in the District of Columbia. Under the Social Work Licensure Compact, a Maryland social worker holding a multistate license through their 'home state' of Maryland will be able to provide services not only in Maryland, but in any state that is also a member of the Compact. Multistate license holders are required to adhere to all the laws and regulations of their home state and the compact member, or 'remote' state.

We support SB 204 as it increases continuity of care when children and families travel or relocate; enhances public safety by creating a data system of information about multistate licensees including license status, investigative information, and adverse actions; reduces the need for Maryland social workers to maintain licensure in multiple states; and authorizes telehealth to increase access to Maryland regulated social work services. Multistate social work licensure will be particularly helpful when a child needs to go to a neighboring participating state or the District for medical care as part of a CPS investigation or needs to be temporarily placed outside a parents' home as part of a CPS or Family Preservation and there is an appropriate relative who lives in the neighboring state or the District. Maryland's multi-state licensed social workers would be permitted to practice in a state or District (if also members of the Compact) and make assessments, conduct visits, and determine the safety and needs of children and relatives who are caring for them.



SB 204 supports the ability for Maryland social workers to work directly with out-of-state relatives or caregivers who are temporarily caring for children without relying on Compact Member jurisdictions' child welfare systems capacity to provide services. Passing SB 204 may also reduce trauma a child and family may experience explaining their stories to different social workers by allowing Maryland's licensed social workers to provide services through telehealth and across state borders.

Additionally, SB 204 would authorize social workers from neighboring Compact participating states to make assessments for their children with temporary placements in Maryland, ensuring continuity of care for those children while reducing workload burden for Maryland social workers. Finally, entering into the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact could improve Maryland Social Work staff retention by increasing geographic flexibility and could improve social worker recruitment from neighboring states with less competitive compensation.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony and recommend a favorable position to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations.

If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at [rachel.sledge@maryland.gov](mailto:rachel.sledge@maryland.gov).

In service,



Rafael López  
Secretary