

OPPOSE SB 359: APRN Compact

Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Dr. Naila Russell and I am the Past-President of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland.

Today I want to talk to you about this compact as a military spouse.

I have been married to an active duty service member for 20 years. During that time I have practiced nursing in five states. Each time my husband has received orders I have applied for my nursing license. I have never been delayed in obtaining a license or starting a position in nearly two decades. This includes as an APRN and when we transferred to Maryland. While this is my experience, I recognize that this may not be the experience of every military spouse.

Fortunately, in 2023, President Biden signed the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act . Under this law, licensing reciprocity between states would apply to the profession of nursing.

In July of 2023 the Department of Justice notified all state licensing officials about new employment-related federal protections for military families. The letter informed state licensing authorities that the amendment allows servicemembers and their spouses to use their professional licenses or certificates in new jurisdictions.

As you can see this federal legislation negates the argument that we need a compact to aid licensing for military spouses.

Of note my spouse will never receive orders to UT, ND, SD, or DE. Since only states who have passed the compact will recognize compact licenses, the APRN compact will not help me anytime soon. But license reciprocity will.

The board of nursing could use the federal law for military spouses as a model for reciprocity legislation (HB 146/SB 221). This would positively impact all advanced practice registered nurses, not just military spouses.

Reciprocity is the best solution for portability of licensure. License reciprocity is like a mini compact. It fastracks licensure by allowing the BON to decide which states are comparable to Maryland. Simply put, it's a reciprocal agreement between states that would allow them to say, "ok, you have high standards, you have vetted this APRN, we will allow them to practice here."

This is something you can do now. Maryland doesn't need to wait for 7 states to enact a compact. Marylanders have little shared interest in ND, SD, or UT, but we do with border states. We control our fate. I urge you to consider license reciprocity as a better option.

I request an unfavorable report on SB 359.