

TO: The Honorable Beidle, Chair and Members, Senate Finance Committee  
FROM: Daphne McClellan, PhD, LMSW  
DATE: February 13, 2024  
RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 204 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 204 which would cause the state of Maryland “to enter into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold interstate compact licenses to practice social work in member states; establishing requirements for multistate licensure; establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; and providing for withdrawal from the Compact.”

During the past twenty years, I have taught social work at UMBC and UMB, I have served as the Executive Director of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and also as Executive Director of the Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE). These positions have given me a great deal of insight into the need for social work services by Maryland citizens, the needs of social workers in our state, and the cumbersome and expensive licensing process for those social workers whose work requires them to be licensed in multiple states.

This legislation would allow licensed Maryland social workers to have the same opportunity to practice across state lines as many other healthcare professionals in our state for whom compacts have already been approved. The compact would increase mobility and work satisfaction for our practitioners while providing continuity of care for clients. It would also allow compact members from other states to provide services in Maryland, thus increasing the available workforce to Maryland citizens in need of social work services.

There are 23 states that currently considering this social work compact legislation. By the end of this legislative session there will undoubtedly be the minimum number of seven states to form the compact and start putting together the rules about how it will be carried out.

As you are aware, a Workgroup has been meeting to consider whether changes are necessary to the social work licensing process in Maryland. Voting in favor of this compact would not negate or hinder the important work of that group in any way.

**Since it is not possible for any state to change the language of the compact at this point, the only questions before this committee are 1) whether or not Maryland Social Workers will have the opportunity to participate in the compact and 2) whether this bill is passed this year, enabling Maryland to be a Charter Member State which would have some say in the by-laws and rules which will implement the Compact.**

Situated as we are, sandwiched between Virginia, D.C., Pennsylvania and Delaware, we have many social workers who must maintain multiple licenses. A compact would make this process much easier, less expensive and much more uniform, while continuing to guarantee protection of the public. It would also serve the important goal of making licensure easier for our very mobile service members and their spouses.

Currently there are thousands of out-of-state social workers who are licensed in Maryland. These social workers and those coming behind them, applying for licenses, add to the enormous workload for the staff of the BSWE. A compact will greatly reduce the need for out of state social workers to apply for Maryland licensure reducing the workload for our understaffed board while keeping them responsible to our state's ethical requirements.

Allowing qualified Maryland social workers to participate in the compact would benefit them and those Maryland citizens who need social work services.

**I ask for a FAVORABLE report on SB 204!**