



Opposition Statement SB409

Health Occupations – Clinical Marriage and Family Therapists -
Reciprocal Licensure Requirements
Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

On behalf of our over 200,000 followers, Maryland Right to Life opposes this legislation as written and respectfully requests an amendment to prohibit abortion purposes from this bill. Without the amendment, we request an unfavorable report for SB409.

Maryland Right to Life opposes SB409 in that the state will be interfering in the independent operations of the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists and their authority over the licensing and regulation of Maryland's marriage and family therapists. Marylanders should be able to trust that their counseling needs are in the hands of the professionals with the best possible educational standards with client-directed goals. With the lowered educational standards, it would be easy for this bill to be exploited to provide counselors with limited background and who are narrowly focused toward limiting motherhood and promoting an abortion agenda whether or not that is in the best interest of the clients. Maryland Right to Life strongly recommends an amendment to preclude this bill being used to provide more staff for the abortion workforce. Minors are clients of Family Therapists as well, and we oppose that therapy being used to direct minors to organizations providing and promoting abortion, especially without parental consent.

We oppose any bill that lowers the standards of practice of any health care provider or occupation without excluding abortion and abortion funding. Scarcity of health care professionals is not a reasonable excuse to lower standards of practice. This bill would waive the requirements for licensure with regard to educational requirements, supervised clinical experience, documentation of graduate course work and passage of an examination approved by the Board.

Maintain and/or adopt reasonable health and safety standards. The state of Maryland needs to promote best medical practice in all areas of healthcare delivery including counseling. Lowering educational requirements is not in the best interest of Marylanders. The abortion industry is only concerned with abortion remaining legal and lucrative. While we oppose abortion, Marylanders should receive the best counseling advice for their families from the most qualified professionals with appropriate education and clinical training.

For these reasons, Maryland Right to Life respectfully asks for an amendment to exclude this bill being used for abortion purposes. Without an amendment, we ask for an unfavorable report on SB409.