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From: **Robin Brannan LCMFT** <rbrannan@betterfamilytherapy.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 2:58 PM

Subject: Written testimony

To: <Jennifer@jfbtherapy.com>

Subject: Support HB 628

Dear Legislators,

As a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT), I am writing to ask you to support HB 628, which will update licensure by endorsement requirements for Marriage and Family Therapists in Maryland.

House Bill 628 will allow an MFT who is already fully licensed in another state and wishes to practice in Maryland to apply to the Maryland licensing board, and the board will grant the applicant a license on the basis of a valid, unencumbered license in another state without the need for additional documents or delay. This bill will help increase access to qualified mental health providers across the state and will remove unnecessary licensing barriers to allow more licensed and qualified individuals the ability to practice in Maryland.

As the owner of a therapy practice in Kensington, MD, I often hire therapists who are moving to Maryland from out of state. They currently wait for months as the board requests various documents before processing their applications. 100% of these applicants have ultimately been approved for Maryland licensure. Their ability to begin serving Maryland families is simply delayed by the current process. We turn families away or ask them to sit on a wait list while waiting for the paperwork to go through.

As a Marriage and Family Therapist who treats many families experiencing divorce or separation, I also expect this legislation to improve access to family therapy for these families. It is common in our area for children of divorce to have one parent living in DC or VA while the other resides in Maryland. Currently, we must decline requests for telehealth family sessions in these cases. With licensure by endorsement, therapists can more easily become licensed across jurisdictions and we can serve these families in the ways that work best for them.

HB 628 will both strengthen the marriage and family therapy profession and help improve access to mental health care for Maryland families. Please support this bill.

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