



The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

INFORMATIONAL LETTER

SENATE BILL 538 – INTERSTATE DENTAL AND DENTAL HYGIENE LICENSURE COMPACT

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is the professional association for dental hygienists providing services in Maryland. As an organization, MDHA seeks to improve the public's total health by advancing the art and science of dental hygiene, including ensuring access to quality oral health care, increasing awareness of the cost-effective benefits of preventative dental services, promoting the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research, and representing and promoting the interests of dental hygienists in Maryland.

In keeping with those goals, MDHA takes this opportunity to provide informational testimony on Senate Bill 538, which would enter Maryland into the Interstate Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensure Compact and authorize a dentist or dental hygienist to practice in a member state and, conversely, authorize eligible licensees from other member states to practice in Maryland. While MDHA is conceptually supportive of the development and participation by the State of Maryland in a licensure compact for dental service practitioners, it seeks to ensure that the compact requires appropriate levels of education and training, testing, and regulation to ensure that preventative and restorative dental services are delivered in a safe and effective manner that protects patients and Maryland's licensees. It is also essential to ensure that whatever licensure compact Maryland enters into is effective in addressing oral health workforce shortages and service delivery needs, meaning that the level of participation by member states is such that Maryland is positively impacted by its participation.

At this time, MDHA is carefully reviewing proposed compacts and all related proposed legislation before the Maryland General Assembly to ensure that the needs of patients and practitioners are met. Therefore, MDHA does not take a formal position on either proposed compact legislation. As a professional association and advocate for effective patient care, MDHA is committed to working with all the sponsors and the members of this Committee to carefully review all relevant legislation and make an informed decision on the best path forward for the dental hygiene profession and the State of Maryland.

MDHA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to submit these comments and participate in any subsequent legislative work on this important and impactful matter.