



Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
Office of the Secretary

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Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
SUPPORT

January 22, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
Room 3, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for the military-connected communities. DVMF fulfills its mission through five core programs: the Service and Benefits Program, which helps veterans access federal, state, and local earned benefits; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, offering assisted living and skilled nursing care; the Cemetery and Memorial Program, providing dignified resting places and maintaining memorials honoring Maryland's veterans; the Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program, fostering connection and awareness; and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, offering financial assistance to veterans and their families in need. These programs reflect Maryland's commitment to honoring and empowering its military-connected community.

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families supports SB 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

DVMF believes SB 174 is an important legislation that represents a significant step forward in improving access to social work services for our military families, veterans, and underserved communities throughout Maryland.

SB 174 aligns closely with DVMF's mission to enhance the lives of military-connected individuals and their families by providing access to critical services and fostering pathways for meaningful employment. The bill's objectives to promote licensure portability, expand the use of telehealth, and address workforce shortages directly benefit our community in several impactful ways:

1. **Support for Military Families:** By allowing active-duty military members and their spouses to retain their social work licensure when relocating, the Compact eliminates significant

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employment barriers for military spouses. This ensures continuity in their professional careers while providing much-needed mental health and social work services in Maryland.

2. **Improved Access to Services:** The Compact's facilitation of telehealth and interstate practice will enhance the availability of social workers for veterans and their families, particularly in rural or underserved areas where access to care can be challenging.
3. **Addressing Workforce Shortages:** By streamlining licensure requirements across states, the Compact enables Maryland to attract and retain a larger pool of qualified social workers, directly addressing gaps in service availability for vulnerable populations, including our state's veteran and military communities.
4. **Enhanced Public Safety and Accountability:** Through information sharing and cooperative oversight, the Compact ensures that social workers practicing in Maryland meet the highest professional standards, protecting the health and safety of those who rely on these essential services.

DVMF is dedicated to advancing initiatives that improve the well-being of our military and veteran families. SB 174 represents an innovative solution that will break down barriers, improve service delivery, and ensure that the heroes who have served our nation—and their families—receive the care and support they need.

Thank you for your attention to this important proposal and I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary