

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

From: **Iris E. Ysern Zarranz, LCSW-C**  
Ysern Therapy & Consulting, LLC

Re: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Date: January 24, 2025

**Dear Madam Chair Beidle and  
Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:**

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Iris E. Ysern Zarranz, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The Compact is an agreement between multiple states that allows social workers licensed in one compact member state to practice in other participating states without having to obtain separate licenses in each of those states. I strongly support The Compact as it provides several key benefits:

**1. Improved Access to Care:**

- By allowing social workers to practice across state lines, the Compact enhances access to mental health services, particularly in underserved or rural areas.
- It also ensures that clients can continue care with the same social worker if they move to another participating state.
- Clients would also be able to continue care while temporarily pursuing higher education at universities or career trainings outside the state, seeking other medical care out of state, as well as when their employment requires mandatory travelling.
- The Compact will promote continuity of care, particularly in the highly mobile DMV area. Clients often live and work in different states and need access to care in both.
- Continuity of care is always clinically recommended (yet currently highly restricted unless provider has additional licenses, as I have, which is costly and demanding).

**2. Support for Military Families:**

- The Compact is especially beneficial for military personnel and their families, as it allows them to maintain their social work licenses when relocating due to service duties, avoiding delays and complications when they move between states to maintain employment.
- It also supports their access to continuity of mental health care for all family members.

**3. Addressing Workforce Shortages:**

- The Compact helps address the shortage of mental health professionals by making it easier for qualified social workers to practice in states with high demand for services, particularly in areas with clinician shortages.

**4. Increased Mobility for Social Workers:**

- Social workers can practice across state lines in other Compact member states, increasing their professional opportunities and the ability to move for personal or career reasons without the need for additional licensure.

**5. Streamlined Processes:**

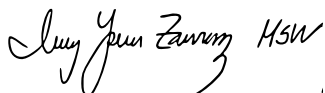
- The Compact creates a shared system of data and standards, which reduces administrative burdens for licensure boards, speeds up the application process, and ensures that state licensure standards are consistently met across participating states.

Witnessing and experiencing the significant benefits, both professionally and personally, from other existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact will ensure much needed enhancement licensure portability for practitioners. Simultaneously, it empowers state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information.

Notably, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact preserves each state's authority to regulate the profession. It does not alter the scope of practice or affect state practice laws. Social workers operating under the Compact must adhere to the laws and rules of the state where they practice, including compliance with the state's scope of practice.

I strongly urge you to lend your full support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, recognizing it is already clinically proven that it can have a positive impact on mental health service accessibility and continuity of care (as experienced during the emergency pandemic and for those of us licensed in additional states), as well as both the successful increased use of Telehealth and the implementation of other medical and behavioral health professions' compacts.

Sincerely,



**Iris E. Ysern Zarranz**

Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical

[Iris@yserntherapyconsulting.com](mailto:Iris@yserntherapyconsulting.com)

State of Maryland License LCSW-C # 10442

**Ysern Therapy & Consulting, LLC**

16031 Comprint Circle,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Montgomery County, Maryland