

TO: The Honorable Beidle, Chair and Members, Senate Finance Committee  
FROM: Daphne McClellan, PhD, LMSW  
DATE: January 24, 2025  
RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 174 which would cause the state of Maryland “to enter into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold interstate compact licenses to practice social work in member states; establishing requirements for multistate licensure; establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; and providing for withdrawal from the Compact.”

During the past twenty-eight years, I have taught social work at UMBC and UMB, I have served as the Executive Director of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and also as Executive Director of the Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE). These positions have given me a great deal of insight into the need for social work services by Maryland citizens, the needs of social workers in our state, and the cumbersome and expensive licensing process for those social workers whose work requires them to be licensed in multiple states.

This legislation would allow licensed Maryland social workers to have the same opportunity to practice across state lines as many other healthcare professionals in our state for whom compacts have already been approved. The compact would increase mobility and work satisfaction for our practitioners while providing continuity of care for clients. It would also allow compact members from other states to provide services in Maryland, thus increasing the available workforce to Maryland citizens in need of social work services.

I have heard that any bills with a fiscal note are in jeopardy this year. The fiscal note attached to this bill says that the BSWE might need to hire an additional person to carry out the tasks of the compact. For several reasons, I do not think this conjecture should affect passage of this bill. First of all, the BSWE is a Special Funds board and is self-supporting. If additional funds are necessary, the board will raise fees. Secondly, the board must currently have a surplus as is evidenced by the Governor’s plan to raid their coffers of more than \$400,000. And finally, the implications of this compact are very hard to determine at this point. We do not know how many fewer applications we will have for licenses because many out of state social workers will no longer need to be licensed in Maryland. However, for every fee lost there should be a similar gain because we do not need to spend the time of BSWE employees processing those out-of-state applications and renewals.

Situated as we are, sandwiched between Virginia, D.C., Pennsylvania and Delaware, we have many social workers who must maintain multiple licenses. A compact would make this process much easier, less expensive and much more uniform, while continuing to guarantee protection of the public. It would also serve the important goal of making licensure easier for our very mobile service members and their spouses.

Allowing qualified Maryland social workers to participate in the compact would benefit them and those Maryland citizens who need social work services. The compact is already in process as 22 states have passed it. Due to the failure to pass this bill last year, Maryland representatives are not at the table as the rules and regulations for carrying out the compact are being developed. Please pass the compact this year so that Maryland social workers can be included in its benefits. We already have a significant social work shortage in Maryland, failure to be included in this compact could easily influence many of our most talented practitioners to move to other states where their license would provide them with much greater access.

**Since it is not possible for any state to change the language of the compact at this point, the only question before this committee is whether or not Maryland Social Workers will have the opportunity to participate in the compact.**

**I ask for a FAVORABLE report on SB 174!**