

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
From: Ann Smith, MSW, LCSW-C
RE: SB 0174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, Hearing on 1/28/25

I am a LCSW-C practicing in Maryland, Baltimore and Howard Counties. I am writing to express my strong support for the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact (Compact), which will be introduced during the 2025 Legislative Session.

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. The Compact provides several key benefits:

1. **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 provide more specialized mental health care in underserved geographic locations, without applying for additional licensure.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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 where mental health providers may be in short supply, especially for much needed specialized services for youth and families, and for trauma informed care. It also ensures that patients can continue care with the same social worker if they move to another participating state, promoting continuity of care.
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.

The Compact is a significant step forward for our profession. I hope you will join me in supporting this important piece of legislation to help strengthen our behavioral health workforce and improve the well-being of those we serve.

Sincerely,

Ann Smith, LCSW-C
443-402-3377
Email: ann@annsmithlcswc.com