



Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work

Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

Senate Bill 174 – *Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact*

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) was established in 1975 to promote and advance the specialization of clinical practice within the social work profession. Through our lobbying, education, community building, and social justice activities, we affirm our commitment to the needs of those in our profession, their clients, and the community at large. On behalf of GWSCSW, we **support** Senate Bill 174.

In addition to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, the Maryland legislature will consider at least two other compacts this session as awareness spreads of the many benefits to consumers, licensure boards, and the social work profession. Benefits include:

- Providing a tool for addressing workforce shortages by allowing increased availability of mental health clinicians to care for vulnerable DC children and adults who are suffering as a result of the mental health crisis and the scarcity of clinicians;
- Supporting military personnel and spouses to more easily maintain their social work licenses when relocating and serve those in the jurisdiction they move to;
- Enhancing mobility for clinical social workers who meet the Compact uniform licensure requirements; and
- Preserving and strengthening the current system of state licensure by creating a shared data system, which reduces administrative burdens and application processing time.

The Social Work Compact will allow LCSW-Cs to work in other states without having to become licensed separately in these states under certain conditions, such as if the LCSW-C's home state joins the Compact; if the LCSW-C then joins the Compact as an individual and pays the set fee for a separate Compact license; and if the LCSW-C has no actionable complaints.

Additionally, if a social worker licensed under the Compact is found to be in violation of professional standards or engages in misconduct, the responsibility for taking disciplinary action lies with the state where the social worker is originally licensed (sending state). The sending state is required to enforce any disciplinary actions imposed by the receiving state (the state where the violation occurred). This ensures that social workers remain accountable for their actions across state lines, maintaining public safety and professional integrity. As touched on above, the Compact also establishes a shared data system that includes information about licensees, investigative information, and adverse actions, further supporting the enforcement of disciplinary measures.

On behalf of the GWSCSW, thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to enhancing mental health services in Maryland. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.

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