

SB 538, Support

SB 21, Oppose

Charles Doring DDS

Written Testimony in Support of SB 538 and in Opposition to SB 21

From Charles A. Doring DDS

A Maryland Healthy Smiles (Dental Medicaid) Provider

Submitted 2/7/2025 for hearing 2/11/2025

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral and written testimony in support of SB 538 and in opposition to SB 21. I am a general dentist in a small group practice in Rockville that employes a team of 15 dental health providers and support staff. I am also the president-elect of the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) as well as Dean's Faculty member at our University of Maryland School of Dentistry. I was a member of the 2022 Maryland legislative Oral Health Care Task Force charged with finding solutions to dental health care disparities. I am speaking to you as an individual and Dental Medicaid provider to you today.

Portability of health care licensure is important for dentists as it allows flexibility in making decisions where to practice dentistry or dental hygiene. I would like to highlight a major difference in the two bills being considered on this topic. SB 21 would allow compact enrolled dentist/dental hygienists from their home state to have the "privilege" to practice in another compact state without the process of "licensure" in the non-home compact state. SB 538 would require the compact dentist/dental hygienist to provide the same licensure requirement in the compact participating state as all the current licensees in that state. Now, the question is: What are the differences between a "privilege" vs. "licensure," and why is it important to patients, dentists and dental hygienists?

- 1) Licensure allows a practicing dentist to apply to the Maryland Controlled Substance Administration license to prescribe. A privilege would not.
- 2) Licensure allows a practicing dentist to utilize e-Prep to apply to become a Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Medicaid Program provider. A privilege would not.
- 3) For licensure, an applicant in Maryland must go through a Maryland background check. Under a privilege, the compact governing body would set limits and be responsible for notifying compact states of any background check discrepancies.
- 4) Licensees must abide by the regulations set forth by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners. Those with privileges would not be under the jurisdiction of the dental board but under the rules of the compact. Licensure requirements vary wildly state to state. Under SB 21, lesser standards than current licensure requirement in Maryland, would allow a compact dentist to practice in Maryland.

SB 21 also has a fiscal impact to the State which would likely filter down to increased licensing fees to all dentists'/ dental hygienists' whether they elect to be in the compact or not. These fees unfortunately passed on to the patients in most cases as the cost of providing care increases. In Maine, the Council on

State Governments (CSG)(model for SB 21) has a State fiscal impact of \$251,358 by fiscal year 2026-27. In Colorado, the CSG is adding \$100 to each dental licensee and \$50 to each dental hygiene licensee whether they are a compact participant or not. SB 538 does not have these fiscal impacts as compact fees are paid by those who participate in the compact.

For these reasons to the above comparison in the two bills before you, I ask for an unfavorable report on SB 21 and a favorable report on SB 538.