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TO: Senator Benson  
FROM: Megan M. Kniffen, LCSW-C

DATE: January 24, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 0174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 0174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Megan M. Kniffen, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact is significant for my practice and the Social Work profession at large. The current situation of needing licensure in each state a provider sees clients is costly, time consuming and not feasible. Personally, after building rapport and working closely with clients, I have had to stop seeing them due to moves, military relocation or going to college. As someone who works with aging and military clients, I am very aware of the difficulty in finding services and the turmoil that interruption in those services causes. The compact would allow for appropriate continuation of care and the ability for clients to continue working with the clinician of their choice.

The ability to practice across state lines will allow for improved professional standards and access to services. The pandemic has shown that improving access to mental health services with video and remote options opens health care to people who could not otherwise benefit. The compact would allow consumers to access providers with specialties and services that would otherwise be unavailable. It would alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care.

Social Workers are essential in the healthcare field and come with a wealth of knowledge and education. As we have seen our colleagues in other healthcare professions benefit from the Social Work Compact, including nursing, physical therapy, psychology, counseling, and

medicine, we have learned that the compact would increase our ability to serve others across the nation. Simultaneously, it empowers state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information.

The Social Work Compact brings numerous benefits, impacting those needing critical mental health support and social workers. It achieves this by:

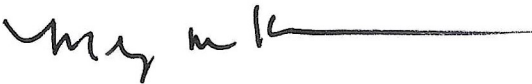
1. Facilitating mobility for social workers meeting uniform licensure requirements.
2. Expanding access to care for clients.
3. Ensuring continuity of care for clients and social workers during relocations or travel across state lines.
4. Simplifying the maintenance of certifications for military personnel and their spouses during relocations.
5. Safeguarding and strengthening the existing system of state licensure.

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 fervently urge you to support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, recognizing its potential to make a transformative impact on mental health service accessibility and continuity of care.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan M. Kniffen', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Megan M. Kniffen  
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)  
Anne Arundel, Maryland