

ASWB Support for MD SB0174.pdf

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Position: FAV



Association of Social Work Boards

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Senator Pamela Beidle
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for Senate Bill 0174, "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" and raising awareness of conflicts with Senate Bill 0379

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Dear Chair Beidle and Distinguished Committee Members:

My name is Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the nonprofit professional regulatory association that supports the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners in the fulfillment of its public protection mandate. I write to your committee today in support of Senate Bill 0174, "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" and also to raise awareness of complications that the recently introduced Senate Bill 0379 will present for Maryland's adoption of the licensure compact.

Founded more than 45 years ago, ASWB is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to social work regulation representing all 64 state and provincial governments. ASWB has been working on the compact since 2021 when we received a grant from the Department of Defense to work with the Council of State Governments to develop model legislation. Compact legislation was published in 2023, and ASWB received funding in 2024 from the Health Resources and Services Administration to support the implementation of the compact. Ongoing work continues with support from the Council of State Governments providing expert guidance and the Defense State Liaison Office offering information to legislators to expand state adoption.

There is considerable need for an interstate licensure compact to improve access to quality social work services. Workforce shortages, increased demand for care, and increasingly complicated social issues are all challenges in need of solutions. The goal of the compact is to eliminate barriers to practice and to client care, along with ensuring public protection. Through the compact, the public has greater access to professional social work services. The compact also allows social workers to ensure continuity of care when clients travel or relocate. Further, the compact reduces administrative burdens associated with holding multiple state licenses, thus enhancing the mobility of licensed social workers. ASWB is committed to supporting the licensure compact as a valuable foundation for cross-jurisdictional common ground for the benefit of our members, the profession, and the public.

As of my submission of this testimony, 22 states across the United States have enacted legislation to adopt the social work licensure compact, and 12 additional states – including Maryland – have legislation currently pending. With more states joining the compact, more mental health professionals will have the ability to serve client populations. The key benefit to us all is access: increasing people's access to social workers and expanding social workers' access to broader communities. Adoption of the social work licensure compact legislation will allow Maryland to expand its communities' access to the critical services provided by the social work profession while simultaneously ensuring consistency regarding what it means to receive those services from an individual using the title of "licensed social worker."

Core to our mission is accountability and public protection through the regulation of safe, competent, and ethical social work practices. Objective entry-to-practice competence measurements help us achieve that mandate. Our work ensures that the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners, as an ASWB member board, has access to the data and tools required to provide oversight for the social work profession, including initial licensure decisions. Senate Bill 0174 ensures the continuation of the high standards and integrity befitting professional regulation. It is because of the integrity of our work on behalf of our members that I must also raise concerns with Senate Bill 0379.

Senate Bill 0379 eliminates the requirement of competence assessment as part of the social work licensure process in Maryland. As this effectively eliminates the licensing examination requirement for the bachelors, masters, and clinical categories of social work licensure in Maryland, Senate Bill 0379 stands in conflict with the goals of the interstate social work licensure compact. Noting the importance of consistency of standards across jurisdictions, the compact requires social workers to take and pass the qualifying national exam that corresponds with the category of multistate license sought by a practitioner.

The removal of the examination requirement diminishes accountability to the public we serve. In this instance, the removal of the examination requirement also jeopardizes Maryland's ability to participate in and enjoy the benefits of the interstate social work licensure compact. This poses a challenge to not only the state's social work workforce but also the communities they serve.

I applaud Senator Benson for her sponsorship of Senate Bill 0174, and I encourage the members of the Senate Finance Committee to send this legislation to the full Maryland General Assembly for consideration. I also caution this committee's colleagues with regards to Senate Bill 0379 due to the reasons stated above.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the members of this committee and other stakeholders to ensure that the people of Maryland have access to a robust workforce of licensed professionals who have demonstrated the knowledge and skills to serve their communities. Please contact us if we may be able to provide any additional information or clarification about the importance of the interstate social work licensure compact. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacey D. Hardy-Chandler, PhD, JD, LCSW, PGDip
Chief Executive Officer
Association of Social Work Boards

ASWB is a nonprofit association whose members comprise the 64 social work licensing authorities from the United States and Canada. ASWB is recognized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as an entity that provides programs and services to social work regulatory boards in promoting uniformity and lessening burdens on state governments.

SB174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact -

Uploaded by: Abigail Snyder

Position: FAV

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 Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
SB174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Senate Finance Committee – January 28, 2025
SUPPORT

Background: SB174 would enter Maryland into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states in order to improve public access to competent social work services; establish requirements for multistate licensure; establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; provide for withdrawal from the Compact; and provide the Act is contingent on the enactment of substantially similar legislation in six other states.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which offers programs and services for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their goals, enhance their wellbeing, and maximize their independence. These services include emotional and behavioral healthcare.

Maryland is in the midst of a behavioral health workforce crisis. The General Assembly has taken several important steps in recent years to streamline the delivery of quality behavioral health care and bolster the state's behavioral health workforce, but we are not out of this crisis yet. We must employ every strategy at our disposal to address the unmet need, and interstate licensure compacts are one of those strategies. They increase access to care by adding depth to local labor pools, and have been proven in our state to work in other professions.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB174.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies, and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

EveryMind in Support of Bill 174.pdf

Uploaded by: Alyssa Sanders

Position: FAV

Testimony of Ann Mazur, CEO of EveryMind,
in support of Bill 174, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
before the Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 174, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. My name is Ann Mazur, and I am the CEO of EveryMind, a nonprofit organization that has been at the forefront of mental health and wellness in Maryland for over 65 years. We provide direct services, education, and advocacy to ensure that individuals and families can access the mental health support they need. As you are undoubtedly aware, Maryland is experiencing a significant behavioral health workforce shortage. According to recent data, more than 60% of Maryland's jurisdictions qualify as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. This crisis is compounded by increasing demand for mental health services, driven by such factors as the rising rates of anxiety and depression among youth, and the ongoing opioid crisis. The shortage of qualified behavioral health professionals has left countless Marylanders waiting weeks—or even months—for critical care.

SB 174 introduces significant improvements to the licensing process for social workers, enhancing access to care and addressing these critical workforce challenges. By recognizing licenses from other states, the bill reduces unnecessary administrative hurdles and ensures that highly qualified professionals can quickly integrate into Maryland's workforce. This approach helps address workforce shortages while expanding access to essential social work services for Maryland residents. Additionally, the bill strengthens public safety by maintaining accountability to Maryland's laws and professional standards, ensuring that all practitioners meet the state's high expectations for care. These changes create a more efficient system that benefits both social workers and the communities they serve.

I also want to highlight how this bill directly addresses barriers that impede access to care for military families, a population we serve extensively through our ServingTogether program. Military spouses often face frequent relocations, requiring them to obtain new licenses in each state—a process that is not only time-consuming and costly but also deeply stressful.

At EveryMind, we see firsthand the devastating consequences of delayed or inaccessible mental health services. Our clinicians, who provide school-based mental health services in over 35 schools in Maryland, are stretched thin, with extended waitlists and concern for those individuals unable to receive services. Additionally, in response to the high demand for mental health services and the critical shortage of behavioral health professionals, we have stepped in to provide mental health literacy to three Maryland school districts, empowering educators, students, and families to recognize and address mental health concerns early, often filling gaps left by the lack of available staff. Meanwhile, our 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline call center continues to see high call volume, reflecting the growing need for immediate crisis support.

SB 174 is not just about addressing a workforce shortage; it's about saving lives. When individuals cannot access the care they need, they are more likely to experience worsening mental health conditions, crises that require hospitalization, or tragic outcomes like suicide. By bolstering the behavioral health workforce, this bill will help mitigate these risks and ensure that Marylanders receive the care they deserve.

In closing, I urge the committee to give SB 174 a favorable report. This legislation is a crucial investment in Maryland's behavioral health and crisis continuum infrastructure and will have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and families across our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

LCPCM-SB 174-Interstate Social Work Licensure Comp

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee
Bill: SB 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Hearing Date: January 28, 2025
Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) support Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. The bill establishes a licensure compact for social workers. Similar to other licensure compacts, social workers would be authorized to practice in all Compact member states under a multistate licensure.

We are facing a crisis with the shortage of behavioral health professions in Maryland, as 21 of 24 jurisdictions have a mental health professional shortage area. Licensure compacts and other reciprocity arrangements will increase access for Marylanders by allowing health professionals, including social workers, from other states to provide in-person or telehealth services.

LCPCM urges the Committee to give SB 174 a FAVORABLE Report.

Please contact Andrea Mansfield at amansfield@maniscanning.com or (410) 562-1617 if we can provide additional information.

AVSSB01742025.pdf

Uploaded by: Ann Smith

Position: FAV

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

InterstateCompact Testimony SB-174.pdf

Uploaded by: arthur flax

Position: FAV

Arthur Flax's
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January 21, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Sponsors, and Members of the Committee
Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill-174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Position- Support

Dear Senator Beidle, Chair:

I am writing to support the enactment of an Interstate Compact for Licensed Social Workers, with an emphasis on the Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical (LCSW-C), in other States the same designation of licensee may be referred to as Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). This classification of licensee has independent statutory authority to evaluate, diagnose, and treat mental and emotional disorders and conditions, impairments and other cited authorities in Federal and State statutes and regulations. In my opinion there must be an objective, fact based, clinical assessment of competency among other requirements, including an understanding of clinical diagnosis, purpose of diagnosis, evaluative procedures, and Federal and State statutes and regulation requirements in the States in which the licensee practices. **Interstate Compacts have certain requirements to participate. However, the licensing criteria for obtaining a license, to engage in a profession, trade, or other activity is a component of the licensing authority, not the Interstate Compact. In Maryland, the criteria affecting the licensure of Social Workers rest with the Board of Social Work Examiners in the Health Occupations Article Title 19.** I support the enactment of a Social Work Interstate Compact which is consistent with the Interstate Compacts of other professions, trades, and activities (such as the Multistate Drivers License Compact) which have been enacted to allow for expansion of practice while protecting public interests.

Please note, enacting this legislation will also enhance the ability of persons' living in Virginia, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania to more easily access services. Many people moved to rural areas in these States, which do not have sufficient localized services; they commute to Maryland for employment purposes. Enactments of this legislation will authorize qualified LCSW-C's to provide services to this population in a more efficient manner

Sincerely,

Arthur Flax, LCSW-C, LCPC, LCADC

State of Maryland Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical; Licensed Clinical Alcohol Drug Counselor, DHMH; Evaluator for the Workers Compensation Commission; Licensed Health Care Provider, HG-8-403 (HB-1510 enrolled bill -2014) in compliance with DHMH Behavioral Health Integration enacted statutes and regulations. Direct Pay Non-Attorney Advocate approved by the Social Security Administration.

Baltimore City Directorate - 2025 SB 174 FAV - Soc

Uploaded by: Ashley Archie

Position: FAV



BALTIMORE CITY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DIRECTORATE

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HeL Recovery Center

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Services

Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2025

SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact Support

On behalf of the Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate (the Directorate), I write to express our support for SB 174, Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. The Directorate is a member group of organizations, made up of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs that serve Baltimore City.

The Directorate unequivocally supports SB 174, which will increase the accessibility to services that social workers are able to provide, across state lines. With the passing of this compact, there will be relief from several redundant, burdensome, and stringent requirements that are associated with the social work requirements to work across various states. Additionally, clients within many communities will be able to have more access to social workers, which is a profession that is imperative in meeting behavioral health needs.

The workforce shortage has made it increasingly difficult to recruit and hire the needed clinicians to work in Maryland's behavioral health programs. Social workers are trained and well equipped to address many behavioral health disorders, while empowering clients. If passed, these much-needed skills could reach many more clients who are in need of resources and counseling to meet their behavioral health needs. In addition, Professional Counselors in Maryland already benefit from this compact, and for the aforementioned reasons, social workers should have the benefit of this inclusion.

We as a membership urge the members of the committee to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Ashley Archie, LCSW-C

Ashley Archie, LCSW-C
President
Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate

c/o HeL Recovery Center, LLC
1900 N. Howard St.
Suite 201
Baltimore, MD 21128

Children's National Testimony - SB 174 - Brenda Sh

Uploaded by: Austin Morris

Position: FAV



111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

**Testimony of Brenda Shepard-Vernon, MSW, LICSW, LCSW-C
Director, Social Work Services, Chaplaincy Services & Housing Program
Children's National Hospital
Department of Family Services**

**SB 174: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Position: FAVORABLE
January 28, 2025
Senate Finance Committee**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 174. My name is Brenda Shepard-Vernon, and I am the Director of Family Services at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Children's National strongly supports the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact ("Compact") with the stated purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate 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. Benefits of the Compact include enhancing the mobility of social workers and increasing professional growth opportunities; ensuring a stronger and more efficient transition to an out-of-state clinical workforce; improving continuity of care for clients and patients that travel or relocate; and creating a multi-state data system about social work licenses to help improve clinical care throughout the state and nation.¹ Children's National supports all of these goals that will improve access to timely and high quality patient care. Given the mobility of providers and patients across Maryland, DC, and Virginia, this Compact is a critically important tool to facilitate practice across state lines and enhance the ability of Maryland to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

Children's National is home to approximately 75 social workers in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Our social workers are deeply invested in every facet of patient care and

¹ [Social Work Licensure Compact](#)

are critical to our mission of helping children grow up stronger. Specifically, our social workers provide an array of services including crisis intervention, behavioral health care, connection to community-based services, and more. While there continues to be a workforce shortage across several clinical specialties in Maryland, such as behavioral health, primary care, and care coordination, the work of our social work team allows our physicians to continue to practice at the top of their scope while ensuring a full array of comprehensive patient needs are being met.² However, we often experience delays in onboarding new staff who relocate from out of state due to complex licensing requirements. Since the lifting of the COVID emergency, we've encountered an unprecedented number of vacant positions in our Family Services department. After we go through the rigorous process of recruiting, interviewing, and offering a position to a candidate, we often face significant delays in obtaining their DC license, even when they are already licensed elsewhere in the U.S. In some cases, it has taken up to two months to hear back from the candidate on whether they were endorsed by DC. This extended waiting period is quite nerve-racking and puts a halt to our recruitment process. Senate Bill 174 would not only allow for speedier onboarding and our ability to hire from a broader applicant pool, but it would also allow us to continue to provide high-quality social work services to our diverse patient population across the DC metro area and improve outcomes for children and their families.

I applaud Senator Benson for introducing this important legislation, which will have life-long benefits for our state's youngest residents and their families and respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 174. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

For more information, please contact:

Austin Morris, Government Affairs Manager
almorris@childrensnational.org

² [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce Report](#)

SB174_SWCompact_KennedyKriegerSupport_1.24.2025.pd

Uploaded by: Caitlin McDonough

Position: FAV



DATE: January 28, 2025
BILL NO: Senate Bill 174
POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations
TITLE: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Bill Summary: Senate Bill 174 enters Maryland into the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. The compact officially came into effect on April 12, 2024, upon enactment in seven states. This milestone set in motion the appointment of commissioners from each state to form a compact commission tasked with implementation. A key component being an interstate database ensuring that social workers participating are compliant with all criteria. The target timeline for opening applications for social workers is in the fall of 2025. Currently, 22 states have enacted this compact, with pending legislation in 11 states, Maryland among them.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based, and community-based programs. Over 27,000 individuals receive services annually at Kennedy Krieger. We employ more than 2,600 persons who play a vital role in our mission to transform the lives of children with disorders of the brain.

At Kennedy Krieger, clinical social workers are part of interdisciplinary teams of professionals. From a multi-systemic perspective, social workers enable individuals and their families to utilize their natural strengths while managing the ongoing realities and stresses of disability, mental health, or medical conditions. Social workers provide the following clinical services, as determined by individual and family needs, through any one of the programs inpatient, outpatient, or community settings at Kennedy Krieger.

- Clinical evaluation of individual and family functioning
- Diagnostic evaluation of mental health conditions
- Development of individualized treatment plans
- Evidence-based individual, family, and group therapy and supportive counseling
- Parent training, support and stress management programs
- Educational advocacy
- Case management, coordination of care, and discharge planning

Rationale:

Social workers are an essential part of the care team. But, due to ongoing shortages, there is a lack of available individuals to serve in these positions. Before the pandemic, there was a global shortage in the healthcare workforce¹. Predictions forecast that employment demands in healthcare will grow faster this decade compared to all other occupations. This includes an increased need for social workers, with demand expected to increase 13% through 2029.²

While over ninety percent of the patients seen by social workers reside across Maryland, the use of telehealth has been beneficial for our Maryland families residing in Southern Maryland, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore. Using Telehealth in state as an alternative service delivery model has reduced costs for families related to lost time from work, gas/mileage costs, and other travel-associated expenses, reduced time out of school for appointments, increased participation in appointments by caregivers who are able to join sessions from work and has allowed patients to receive service in their natural setting.

¹ Figueroa CA, Harrison R, Chauhan A, Meyer L. Priorities and challenges for health leadership and workforce management globally: a rapid review. *BMC Health Services Research*. 2019;19(1)doi:10.1186/s12913-019-4080-7

² Source: www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm#tab-1

Out of State Services:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. In pre-pandemic times, families would need to plan to complete the potentially costly and time-consuming trip to Kennedy Krieger Institute to obtain the skilled services their child and/or family required. During the pandemic, the Telehealth service delivery model enabled our social workers to see patients from 14 states and the District of Columbia. This minimized the number of onsite visits required to receive a full interdisciplinary approach to evaluation and treatment.

Since the conclusion of pandemic waivers, our social workers are unable to provide specialized care through Telehealth to those who reside in other states unless they obtain additional licenses. Social workers across Kennedy Krieger are assigned to specific service delivery settings, like schools or multidisciplinary teams serving many unique conditions. The multi-D teams serve patients and families from out-of-state; the compact will allow continued follow-up with the medical team.

Maryland's participation in the Social Work Licensure Compact would serve to:

- increase client/patient access to specialized care,
- facilitate continuity of care when client/patient relocates (e.g., visits a parent or relative for an extended period, goes away for college) in a Compact state,
- certify that social workers licensed in other Social Work Licensure Compact states and treating Maryland patients have met acceptable standards of practice across education, training and experience,
- promote cooperation between Compact states in areas of licensure and regulation,
- offer a higher degree of consumer protection across state lines, and
- permit social workers to provide services to populations currently underserved or geographically isolated.

Enacting the Social Work Licensure Compact will allow families across participating states to have access to the highest quality of social workers available while also decreasing the burdens placed on the patient, family, and the system, and we thank Senator Benson and the Finance Committee for their leadership on this issue. It is time for Maryland to join the Social Work Compact to ensure access to mental health for all Maryland residents, and to ensure that Maryland social workers can provide telebehavioral health services to all their patients, including those in states participating in the Compact.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.

MC Federation of Families Testimony 2025 SB 174 In

Uploaded by: Celia Serkin

Position: FAV



Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc.

**Colesville Professional Center
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301-879-5200 (phone number)
301-879-0012 (fax number)
info@mcfof.org (email)
www.mcfof.org (website)**

SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

I am Celia Serkin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. (MC Federation of Families), a family peer support organization serving diverse families in Montgomery County who have children, youth, and/or young adults with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges. Our Certified Family Peer Specialists are parents who have raised or are currently raising children with these challenges. I am a Montgomery County resident. I have two children, now adults, with behavioral health challenges. My son has severe depression. My daughter has co-occurring challenges.

MC Federation of Families is pleased to support SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. The bill enters Maryland into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states; establishes requirements for multistate licensure; establishes the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission; and provides for withdrawal from the Compact.

SB 174 is critically important for Maryland to be able to increase the number of social workers available to meet to the increased demand for mental health and substance use services across the lifespan. The workforce shortage in Maryland is drastic and future predictions severe. Every county in Maryland except two are designated by the federal government as either a partial or countywide Mental Health Shortage Area (MHPSA).¹ Data from Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent highlight an escalating crisis in access to mental health and substance use care.² According to the report, the state's current behavioral health workforce is 50 percent smaller than necessary to meet today's demand and 45 percent of the existing workforce is expected to leave the field by 2028. By 2028, Maryland will need 2,675 new social workers to work in behavioral health settings.

NAMI Maryland reports that 781,000 adults in Maryland have a mental health condition, 57,000 Marylanders age 12 – 17 have depression, and 45.5% of Marylanders age 12 – 17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year.³ Maryland ranks among the top five states in terms of opioid-related overdose deaths, with particularly high rates of heroin-related deaths.⁴

In addition to needing more social workers now and in the future, there is a tremendous need for social workers who speak different languages; are representative of the given populations being served; and possess cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills. There are many benefits of having social workers who speak the same language and share cultural similarities with those they are serving, such as improved communication, increased trust, better rapport, deeper understanding, more effective interventions, and positive outcomes. Families feel more comfortable sharing sensitive information and concerns with social workers who understand their background and perspective. Conversely, there are

negative impacts when families receive services from social workers who lack an understanding of their culture, values, and worldviews and who cannot speak their language. These include ineffective interventions, mistrust, lack of engagement, and misinterpretations of behavior, resulting in a failure to adequately address the family's needs and concern, hindering the therapeutic process, and potentially causing harm to the family.

MC Federation of Families urges the Senate Finance Committee to pass SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

¹ Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, July 2024-Maryland. Rural Health Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/7?state=MD>

² Andy Hall, Aaron Korn, Kweilin Waller, and Josh Shapiro, PhD, with Trailhead Strategies, Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent: a needs assessment to inform the design of the behavioral Health Workforce Investment Fund established by the Maryland legislature through Senate Bill 283, October 2024.

³ Mental Health in Maryland Fact Sheet, 2021. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

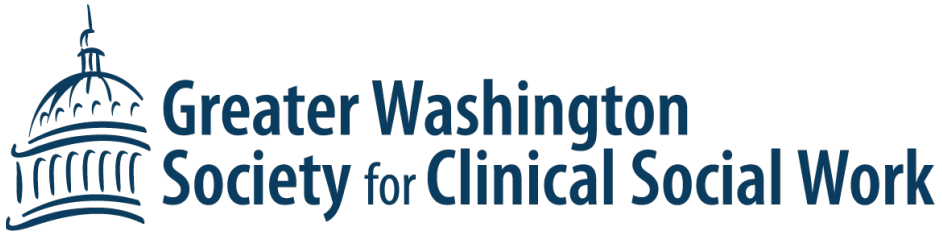
<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/MarylandStateFactSheet.pdf>

⁴ Lyle Cooper R, Thompson J, Edgerton R, Watson J, MacMaster SA, Kalliny M, Huffman MM, Juarez P, Mathews-Juarez P, Tabatabai M, Singh KP. Modeling dynamics of fatal opioid overdose by state and across time. *Prev Med Rep.* 2020 Aug 26;20:101184. doi: 10.1016/j.pmedr.2020.101184. PMID: 32995141; PMCID: PMC7516293.

SB0174_FAV_GWSCSW_Interstate Social Work Licensure

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



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.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_1 - Julia Webb.pdf

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Julia Webb, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for accepting my written statement endorsing SB 174 on the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact” to be entered into the public hearing record. I am Julia Webb, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker-Certified (LCSW-C) practicing in Frederick County, Maryland. The significance of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the glaring disparity between the demand for mental health services and the availability of licensed professionals capable of delivering ethical and secure care. Across states, mental health professionals undergo rigorous education and training, alongside substantial post-licensure continuing education requirements. Therefore, the ability to practice across state lines holds the promise of mitigating disparities in accessing culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. This is crucial for marginalized communities who face barriers such as socioeconomic status, (dis)ability, gender diversity, and sexuality, hindering their access to adequate care, especially during the pandemic or other crises.

Similar to existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professionals, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact promises to bolster licensure portability while empowering state regulatory bodies to safeguard consumers through improved sharing of licensure information.

The benefits of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact are manifold:

- Facilitating mobility for social workers meeting uniform licensure requirements;
- Expanding access to care for clients;
- Ensuring continuity of care for clients and social workers relocating or traveling across states;

- Simplifying certification maintenance for military personnel and spouses during relocation;

Crucially, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact upholds each state's authority to regulate the profession without altering scope of practice or affecting state practice laws. Social workers operating under the Compact must adhere to the laws and regulations of the state in which they practice, including compliance with the state's scope of practice.

I strongly advocate for your support of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. It represents a vital step towards enhancing mental health support accessibility and reinforcing the professional landscape for social workers and their clients alike.

Sincerely,

Julia Webb
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)
Frederick County, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_2 - Charity Mitchel

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Charity Mitchell, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle, and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Charity Mitchell, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Frederick County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,



Charity Mitchell
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)
Frederick County, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_3 - Mary Graham.pdf

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Mary Graham, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am in support of this Bill because it will allow mental health providers to offer consistent and available services to their clients in whatever state they may be. I currently see a client who experiences severe depression, she will be traveling to be with family in another state, because we may meet virtually, she had assumed she could carry on seeing me while she is with her family. Unfortunately, under the current rules this will not be possible. Without detailing her trauma, this will make her visit to her family very much more difficult.

Social workers who work in areas near adjoining states must currently be licensed in all states that share borders. In Frederick County the Pennsylvania border is close by, West Virginia shares a boundary with Washington County. I am aware of clients who move back and forth to be with family members, which means that therapy sessions must be curtailed unless the therapist is licensed in the adjoining state. The process of obtaining a license is time consuming and expensive.

Given the need for mental health services and the availability of virtual connections it is even more important that those who seek to both provide and receive care not be hindered by this licensing rule. Our exam is a national exam, why must each state make their own rules about licensing? I have a driver's license from Maryland, and I am able to drive my car in every state! It is time. Please support Senate Bill 174

Thank you.

Mary Graham, LCSW-C
Licensed Certified Social

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_4 - Erica Greenspan

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

From: Erica Greenspan, LCSW-C, LICSW

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174-Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am an LCSW-C (Clinical Social Worker). 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 move for personal or career reasons without the need 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. 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,

Erica Greenspan, LCSW-C, LICSW

301-531-5181

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_5 - Dara Goldberg.p

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: From: Dara Goldberg, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am an LCSW-C since and have been a practicing social worker since 2008. I am writing to express my strong support for the Interstate Social Work Licensure 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 move for personal or career reasons without the need 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. I currently accept Tricare insurance and see many of these families for therapy. I continue to hear how challenging it can be to receive mental health services or the frustrations of finding new providers every few years.

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. 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,

Dara Goldberg

4845 Rugby Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
daragoldbergtherapy@gmail.com
301-908-2643

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_6 - Danielle Tiley.

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Danielle Tiley, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

As a licensed social worker based in University Park, Maryland, I am proud to serve clients across multiple jurisdictions. I hold licenses in both Maryland and Washington, D.C., and I am currently navigating the process—and costs—of obtaining licensure in Virginia to continue serving clients who have relocated there. This experience highlights the significant challenges faced by social workers and underscores the urgent need for an interstate compact for social work.

An interstate compact would be a game-changer for both social workers and the clients we serve. For clients, continuity of care is vital. Relocating to a new state often brings upheaval and stress, and the ability to maintain a trusted therapeutic relationship can provide stability and support during a critical time. The compact would remove the barriers that currently force clients to start over with a new therapist, ensuring they can continue their care without disruption.

For clinicians, the compact would ease the administrative burden of maintaining multiple licenses across state lines. Currently, we must navigate a maze of licensing fees, continuing education requirements, and renewal deadlines, all of which vary by jurisdiction. This fragmented system not only creates financial and logistical strain but also detracts from the time and energy we could otherwise dedicate to our clients.

The social work profession is built on the principles of accessibility, equity, and client-centered care. An interstate compact aligns with these values by

fostering a more seamless and equitable system for both clients and practitioners. I urge you to support Senate Bill 174 and help create a framework that supports continuity of care, reduces barriers for clinicians, and ultimately strengthens the profession of social work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Danielle Tiley
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_7 - Mira Silberg.pd

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Mira Silberg, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am writing to underscore the critical importance of continuity of care for individuals navigating mental health challenges, particularly in the context of interstate mobility. The passage of Senate Bill 174, establishing the Social Work Compact, is essential to ensuring that people do not face unnecessary disruption in their therapeutic journey when relocating to another state.

As a licensed professional, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by clients who must terminate therapy abruptly due to job relocations or life circumstances. This sudden disruption can be deeply destabilizing, forcing individuals to start over with a new provider. They must build trust, establish rapport, and recount their personal histories—often a painful and exhausting process that hinders progress.

The therapeutic relationship is a cornerstone of mental health care, built on consistency, safety, and trust. When this relationship is interrupted, the emotional and practical toll on clients is significant, particularly for those dealing with trauma, anxiety, or other complex mental health issues.

By enabling social workers to practice across state lines, the Social Work Compact would eliminate these barriers, allowing for seamless transitions and uninterrupted care. This would empower clients to focus on healing and growth rather than the administrative and emotional burden of starting over.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 174 and ensure that we prioritize the well-being of individuals who rely on consistent, compassionate mental health care—no matter where life takes them. Thank you for supporting this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Mira Silberg
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_8 - Rachel Zubek.pd

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Rachel Zubek, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Rachel Zubek, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Baltimore City, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. We are still in a mental health emergency and the need for therapists/counselors continues to grow. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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:

Rachel Zubek, LCSW-C
New Growth Counseling & Consulting
Baltimore, MD
rachelzubektherapy@gmail.com



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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

Rachel Zubek

Rachel Zubek
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C), Founder/Owner
New Growth Counseling
Baltimore City, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_9 - Kim Torrence.pd

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Kim Torrence, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174- Interstate Social Work
Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the
Senate Finance Committee:

I am a therapist in Maryland specializing in treating adults with childhood trauma. Therapy with this kind of trauma takes time, with establishing trust in safety in the therapeutic relationship being essential to transformation and healing. Consistency in therapy is also important.

However, state laws requiring social workers be licensed in each state means that clients cannot access therapy if traveling for work or medical appointments. Here's a recent example of how these state laws interfere with continuity of care in my practice:

Client "Max" began services with me during the pandemic when he relocated to Maryland to be closer to family. Max has chronic illness, and his symptoms can make it difficult for him to get out of bed. Some of the biggest struggle for Max is the depression, loneliness, and hopelessness he can feel as he struggles to determine the causes of his chronic illness.

Max's family take him to appointments at specialized health care centers out of state, in a desperate attempt to find chronic illness specific medical care that will help him get back to living a normal life. These trips are often stressful, exhausting, and disappointing, as the medical providers often don't have answers for Max's symptoms. However, in keeping with the legal restrictions of practicing across state lines, Max is unable to attend therapy with me during these trips because I am not licensed in that state. And he really needs extra support at these times. He may have to go a week or more before he gets back to Maryland, and we can meet again. This can disrupt his therapy progress as he must await care during

very stressful times. The alternative of finding him a referral for an in-state therapist when Max is at that treatment center and then finding ways to get his insurance to cover an out-of-state therapist, are all too overwhelming for him to navigate and furthermore, it doesn't make sense for his care because he is based in Maryland and is already being treated by me.

This is just one example. I am currently licensed in three states and soon to add a fourth so that I can provide consistent care to my clients. The Social Work Compact would enable me to provide consistent care for my clients despite the changing circumstances of their lives.

Sincerely,

Kim Torrence, LCSW-C, SEP, RYT, IFS Therapist

20250128_MCFP_AM_Support_SB174_Social_Work_v1.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher Arnold

Position: FAV



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

January 28, 2025

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Committee on Health & Government Operations
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Remarks of
Christopher R. Arnold
Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office

Support of: SB 174 – AN ACT concerning Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Testimony

Madame Chair and honorable committee members, the Department of Defense is grateful for the opportunity to support the policies reflected in Senate Bill 174, relating to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. This policy meets the Department's fullest intent regarding military spouse employment and economic opportunities.

I am Christopher Arnold, the Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison at the United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We represent the Department and establish relationships with state leaders across the country who are concerned for troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. I thank you for the opportunity to address you today and for your support of our service members and their families.

Maryland has taken several important steps toward improving licensure for military spouses. Notably, we see interstate compacts for occupational licensure as an excellent method of assisting all practitioners in addition to providing reciprocity for military spouses.¹

The Secretaries of the Military Departments have made the importance of military spouse licensure explicitly clear as they consider the availability of license reciprocity when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives. This consideration was codified by Congress as a requirement in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.² Notably, 10 U.S.C. § 1781(b) note requires the military services to produce annual basing decision scorecards at the state and

¹ Department of Defense. *Military Spouse Licensure: State Best Practices and Strategies for Achieving Reciprocity*. November 2019. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/military-spouse-licensure-report-2019.pdf>

² Public Law No: 116-92, Section 2883.

installation level considering military family readiness issues including participation in interstate licensing compacts.³

Congress provided the Department authority to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments to provide grants to professions in order to develop compact law to be approved by States.⁴ The Department has provided funding to nine professions, and expects to fund development of additional compacts under the agreement.⁵

Occupational licensure compacts provide consistent rules for licensed members to work in other states. Common misinformation about compacts is that they either lower or raise the standards for the occupation, when in fact, compact states have the option to issue a “compact license” and also a “State-only license” to maintain their State’s standards. States have committed to using interstate compacts, which establish common understanding of competency and its measurement within the occupation, to resolve the interstate issue of license portability.

The Social Work Licensure Compact authorizes practitioners through a multistate license and uses a mutual recognition model.⁶ Military spouse social workers who call Maryland home and are working inside and outside the state must now bear the time-consuming and costly expense of applying for single state licensure in every state where they seek to work.

Military spouses are a cross-section of the American population, although a greater percentage of them are in licensed occupations than their civilian counterparts,⁷ and they are significantly more mobile.⁸ Compacts can provide seamless reciprocity for military spouses in an occupation. Barriers to the transfer and acceptance of certifications and licenses that occur when state rules differ can have a dramatic and negative effect on the financial well-being of military families.

The Social Work Licensure Compact allows an active duty service member, or their spouse, to designate a home state where the individual has a current license in good standing. This state then serves as the individual’s home state for as long as the service member is on active duty,

³ *Id.* (h)

The secretaries must consider “*whether the State in which an installation subject to a basing decision is or will be located ... has entered into reciprocity agreements to recognize and accept professional and occupational licensure and certification credentials granted by or in other States or allows for the transfer of such licenses and certifications granted by or in other States.*”

⁴ 10 U.S.C. §1784 (Public Law 116-120, Section 575).

⁵ Through a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments, grants will allow selected professions to work with CSG’s National Center for Interstate Compacts to develop model interstate occupational licensure compact legislation, addressing license portability affecting transitioning military spouses, along with other practitioners in the profession. The seven selected professions are teaching, social work, cosmetology, massage therapy, dentistry/dental hygiene, school psychology, dietetic nutrition, athletic trainers and respiratory therapists.

⁶ <https://swcompact.org/>

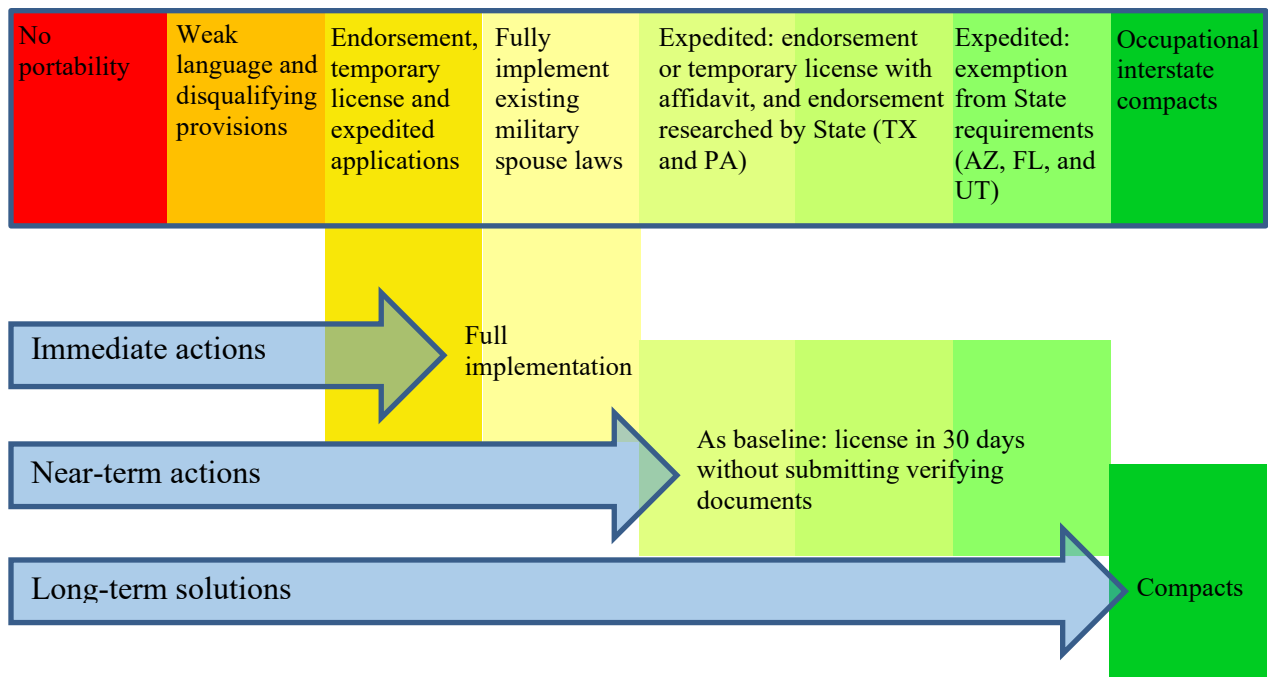
⁷ 34 percent of active duty spouses self-identified as needing a State issued license to work (2017 Survey of Active Duty (Active Component) Spouses, Tabulations of Responses; Office of People Analytics Report No. 2018-006, May 2018), compared to 30 percent of the civilian population (The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institute, https://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/percent_of_occupations_requiring_a_license_by_state)

⁸ “Military spouses are 10 times more likely to move across State lines than their civilian counterparts,” “Supporting Our Military Families: Best Practices for Streamlining Occupational Licensing Across State Lines,” U.S. Department of Treasury and U.S. Department of Defense, February 2012, page 7.

while adhering to the laws, rules and scope of practice in Maryland. The compact allows nurses to obtain multistate license to practice in thirty-five states and two territories, saving them from the cost of having to apply for an additional license in each state.

In addition to supporting the drafting of model compact laws for professions, 10 § U.S.C. 1784(h) authorizes DoD to support professions with developing database systems to make the compacts more efficient and operational. These database systems allow States to share information about practitioners using compact provisions to work in member States.⁹

The Department encourages States to engage in immediate actions to fully implement military spouse licensure laws, near-term actions to at least attain a baseline of getting military spouses a license in thirty (30) days based on minimal documentation, and removing substantially equivalent language; and long-term solutions for reciprocity through compacts:



Maryland has already enacted and joined the Audiology/Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact, the Cosmetology Licensure Compact, the Licensed Professional Counseling Compact, the Nurse Licensure Compact, the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, and the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact.

⁹ The current effort to develop compacts through a cooperative agreement and to approve compacts is a collaboration between the federal government, state governments and non-governmental organizations representing professionals and state licensing boards. Through this collaborative effort, all practitioners within a profession will have greater mobility while sustaining the focus on assuring public safety through licensure. This is significant for the military community in that along with active duty military spouses receiving the benefit of compacts, active duty members, members of the reserve component, reserve component spouses, transitioning Service members and other Veterans benefit from the mobility provided through compacts.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous efforts that the Old Line State has historically made to support our service members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support these policies and grateful to the sponsor, Senator Benson, the many cosponsors, and the members of the Maryland Senate Veterans caucus for their leadership and dedication to supporting our service members and their families.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these issues. As always, as Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison, I stand ready to assist and answer whatever questions you may have.

Yours etc.,

CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD
Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office

2025-01-28 - MD - Pyramid Healthcare - Testimony r

Uploaded by: Collan Rosier

Position: FAV

January 28, 2025

Delivered Via [MyMGA Witness Signup Platform](#)

The Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Hon. Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
223 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Pyramid Healthcare Testimony In Favor of Senate Bill 174 – An Act Concerning the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact”

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Committee:

The Pyramid Healthcare, Inc. (“Pyramid Healthcare”) family of companies urges the Committee to favorably adopt SB 174 to have Maryland join the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact (“SW Compact”).

Pyramid Healthcare is an integrated behavioral healthcare system serving Medicaid and commercial clients in 8 states across a continuum of residential and outpatient substance use disorder (“SUD”), mental health, autism, and eating disorder treatment services. We employ over 3,600 team members across our 80+ active facilities which treat approximately 12,000 clients on any given day.

In Maryland, we operate five locations serving over 2,000 residents per year: a withdrawal management & residential treatment center and an outpatient treatment center in California, a withdrawal management & residential treatment center in Charlotte Hall, and a withdrawal management & residential treatment center in Joppa. In January 2025, our new Prince George’s County facility began treating clients. That facility will ultimately offer approximately 75 withdrawal management & residential SUD treatment beds for adult residents of Prince George’s County and throughout central Maryland. In total, we have over 200 licensed SUD residential treatment beds for adult Medicaid clients across the state.

Maryland has already recognized the value of interstate licensure compacts, having previously adopted the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact, Interstate Professional Counselors Compact, Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, Nurse Licensure Compact, Interstate Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact, and the Physical Therapy Compact.¹ The SW Compact has already been adopted by 22 states and legislation is currently pending in 6 other states.² In addition, the SW Compact is supported by the Council of State Governments (“CSG”), the U.S. Department of Defense (“DoD”),

¹ <https://www.cchpca.org/topic/licensure-compacts/>.

² <https://swcompact.org/compact-map/>.

and the Association of Social Work Boards (“ASWB”), as well as numerous other organizations who helped develop the SW Compact.³

The Social Work Licensure Compact is an interstate occupational licensure compact that allows social workers with bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees, and clinical licenses to provide services to clients in all other Compact states instead of having to file duplicate license applications in each state in which they practice.⁴ Each Compact state extends licensure reciprocity to the other states in the Compact. In order to be eligible, a social worker must first already be eligible for or hold a social work license in their primary state of residence and meet other criteria. After the social worker’s eligibility is determined, they receive a multistate license and may begin working in any SW Compact member state.

There are over 500,000 licensed social workers across the United States and Pyramid Healthcare employs many social workers across our counseling, operations, clinical, quality, compliance, and utilization review teams, among other functions. The SW Compact will streamline the licensing process while reducing administrative burden and allowing social workers to quickly resume providing care. It does so while protecting patient and public safety.

Joining the SW Compact will facilitate multistate practice and reduce the barriers to license portability for our current and potential employees by easing mobility across state lines, expanding employment opportunities to address crucial workforce shortages, allowing continuity of care for our patients that move across state lines, allows the use of telehealth to be leveraged, and supports the relocation of military spouses and their families.

Given Maryland’s unique geographic location, bordering Pennsylvania, Virginia, the District of Columbia, Delaware, and West Virginia—as well as the presence of major military installations where members of the military and their families are frequently relocated into and out of the region, the SW Compact will positively impact the state’s ability to attract and retain qualified and desperately needed social workers.

Please adopt SB 174 to have Maryland join the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Thank you for your support of behavioral health providers – including those in both mental health and substance use – in Maryland and for considering our policy proposals and recommendations on behalf of Pyramid Healthcare. If we can provide any additional information or materials, please contact me at crosier@pyramidhc.com or 667-270-1582. In addition, we invite you or a member of the Committee or staff to reach out and schedule a visit to one of our Maryland locations sometime soon to learn more about our programs and services.

Sincerely,



Collan B. Rosier
Vice President of Government Relations

**CC: Members, Senate Finance Committee
Tammy Kraft, Committee Manager**

³ <https://swcompact.org/>.

⁴ <https://swcompact.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2023/02/Social-Work-Licensure-Compact-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

MD Addiction Directors Council - 2025 SB 174 FAV -

Uploaded by: Craig Lippens

Position: FAV



Maryland Addiction Directors Council

Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Support

Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) represents outpatient and residential substance use disorder and dual recovery treatment across the state of Maryland. Our members provide over 1,200 residential treatment beds across the state.

MADC employs licensed and certified drug and alcohol counselors and social workers. There is a dire shortage of candidates across the state of for all levels of direct patient care. MADC supports a compact for social workers to allow for more eligible, and appropriately licensed social workers to work in the state of Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony and we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.

Sincerely,

Craig Lippens

Craig Lippens, President
MADC

SB0174_MHAMD_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Martin

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMd) is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Senate Bill 174.

SB 174 enters Maryland into the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact whereby Maryland social workers can deliver care in other compact states, and vice versa. The state has already adopted compacts for professional counselors and psychologists.

Data from an [alarming new assessment](#) of Maryland's behavioral health workforce highlights an escalating crisis in access to mental health and substance use care. According to the report¹, which was completed pursuant to legislation the General Assembly passed in 2023 ([SB 283/HB 418](#)), the state's current behavioral health workforce is 50 percent smaller than necessary to meet today's demand and 45 percent of the existing workforce is expected to leave the field by 2028.

The scale of this workforce crisis is particularly striking among Maryland social workers. In 2023, there were an estimated 2,799 social workers employed in behavioral health settings. In order to meet the current demand and replace workers leaving the field, Maryland will need to attract an additional 2,675 social workers by 2028. This will be a tall challenge given recent graduation trends and employment patterns. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, degree completions from Maryland's social work master's programs have declined nine percent from their 2019 peaks. Further, only a small portion of graduates from behavioral health-related and nursing education programs actually work jobs in Maryland providing behavioral health services to residents. Seventy percent of Masters of Social Work and Clinical and Counseling Psychology graduates from Maryland universities since 2014 are either working in other industries in Maryland, are employed out of state, or not working one year after degree completion.

The General Assembly has taken several important steps in recent years to streamline the delivery of quality behavioral health care and bolster the state's behavioral health workforce, but we are not out of this crisis yet. We must employ every strategy at our disposal to address the unmet need, and interstate licensure compacts are one of those strategies. They increase access to care by adding depth to local labor pools.

SB 174 will help ensure Marylanders can access mental health and substance use care when and where needed. For this reason, MHAMd supports this bill and urges a favorable report.

¹ *Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent*. Maryland Health Care Commission. October 2024.
https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md_bh_workforce_rpt_SB283.pdf

For more information, please contact Dan Martin at (410) 978-8865

SB 174_SW Interstate Compact_BHSB_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



January 28, 2025

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. This bill will allow out of state social workers to work and live in Maryland with far fewer administrative hurdles. We hope the General Assembly will support this initiative as a part of the solution to our state’s overall behavioral health workforce challenges.

Maryland has faced a behavioral health workforce shortage for many years and the pandemic only made this worse. A recent comprehensive analysis found that there were 2,799 social workers employed in behavioral health settings in Maryland and an additional 2,675 would be needed by 2028 to meet the state’s needs.¹ Most behavioral health providers have numerous open positions that are going unfilled, and many current professionals are nearing retirement. This shortage has hindered our ability to implement new initiatives and to improve the racial diversity of the workforce locally in Baltimore and is also causing overall behavioral health costs to rise.

Maryland will need to implement a variety of strategies to address its behavioral health workforce shortage, but one strategy that does not have a fiscal cost for the state is making it easier for licensed professionals to work in Maryland. SB 174 puts such a strategy in place by directing Maryland to join the interstate social work licensure compact. The need to obtain a new license to practice in Maryland can discourage professionals from taking a job in a new state. The interstate compact would eliminate this unnecessary barrier to taking a Maryland job. It will also allow out of state social workers to provide services to Marylanders more easily through telehealth.

This legislation is a well-designed initiative that will simplify the process for out-of-state social workers to work in Maryland. **We urge the Senate Finance Committee to support SB 174 to address the state’s behavioral health workforce needs.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

Endnotes:

¹ Maryland Health Care Commission. Investing in Maryland’s Behavioral Health Talent. October 2024.
https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md_bh_workforce_rpt_SB283.pdf

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_10 - Linda Beck.pdf

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV

Linda Beck, LCSW-C
100 Church Lane, 1st Floor
Pikesville, MD 21208
443-660-6783
lbeck7772@gmail.com

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Linda Beck, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174- Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting House Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Linda Beck, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Baltimore County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

LBeck

Linda Beck

Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)

Baltimore County, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_11 - Stephanie Walk

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Stephanie Walker, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174- Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am an LCSW-C. 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 move for personal or career reasons without the need 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. 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,

Stephanie Walker, LCSW-C, LLC
5100 Buckeystown Pike, Ste 250
Frederick MD 21704 Phone: 301-857-8600

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_12 - Pamela Newman.

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV



PRN Counseling
Mental health to meet your needs

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Pamela R. Newman, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Pamela R. Newman, LCSW-C, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. Simultaneously, it empowers state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information.



PRN Counseling
Mental health to meet your needs

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

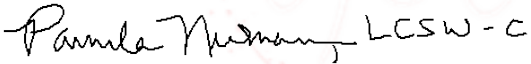
1. Facilitating mobility for social workers meeting uniform licensure requirements.
2. Expanding access to care for clients.
3. Ensuring continuity of care for clients and social workers during relocations or travel across state lines.
4. Simplifying the maintenance of certifications for military personnel 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

 LCSW-C

Pamela R. Newman, LCSW-C
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Montgomery County, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_13 - Lisa Fisher.pd

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV

TO: TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson
FROM: Lisa D. Fisher, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact” for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Lisa D. Fisher, a Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical (LCSW-C) in Maryland; a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Virginia, and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Delaware. I live in Harford County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Worker Interstate Licensure Compact resonates with me as a mental health professional due to the movement of clients – moving because of family needs, work relocation, cost of living, and any other meaningful reason to the client. The continuum of care is more critical than an abrupt termination of care. The interstate social work licensure compact will lessen the effects of termination and starting all over again for the client.

The ability to practice across state lines is like a driver’s license. I have a Maryland driver’s license in good standing. I can drive in the United States without limitations and follow each State’s law. It is the same with the interstate social work licensure. I must respect the law and obey the law.

When I was a graduate student, the tier explained to me was psychiatrist, psychologist, and licensed certified/clinical social worker. Whether this is accurate, other healthcare professions allow licensure portability for practitioners such as psychologists and nurses. Let’s allow the licensed, certified clinical social worker to do the same.

Thank you for your time, attention, and support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Respectfully, I am,



Lisa D. Fisher, M.Ed., M. Div., BCC, LCSW-C
Maryland #21862
Virginia #0904016088
Delaware #Q1-0012465

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_14 - Renee Fuller.p

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Renee Fuller, LMSW

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Renee Fuller, a Licensed Social Worker (LMSW) residing and practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

Renee Fuller
Licensed Social Worker (LMSW)
Montgomery County, Maryland

SB0174_FAV_Social Work Compact_15 - Sandra Silberm

Uploaded by: Danna Kauffman

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Sandra Silbermann, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I am an LCSW-C. I am writing to express my strong support for the Interstate Social Work Licensure 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:

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. It also ensures that patients can continue care with the same social worker if they move to another participating state.

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, and areas with clinician shortages.

Support for Military Families: The Compact is especially beneficial for military personnel and families, as it allows them to maintain their social work licenses when relocating between states due to service duties, avoiding delays and complications,

Increased Mobility for Social Workers: Social workers can practice across state lines in Compact member states, increasing their professional opportunities and the ability to move without the need for additional licensure.

Streamlined Processes: The Compact creates a shared system of data and standards, reducing administrative burdens for licensure boards, speeding up the application process, and ensuring state licensure standards are consistently met.

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,

Sandra Silbermann, LCSW-C
6410 45th Place
Riverdale Park, Maryland 20737
240-343-3044 ssilbes@gmail.com

Testimony in favor of SB 174.pdf

Uploaded by: Daphne McClellan

Position: FAV

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!

Maryland Military Coalition SB0174 Written Testimo

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 24, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Chair Beidle and distinguished members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact**, sponsored by Senator Joanne C. Benson. This bill would enact the above compact, developed in partnership with the Department of Defense (DoD), the Council of State Governments (CSG), and the Association of Social Work Boards to support the mobility of licensed social workers. This additional licensing pathway will facilitate multistate practice among member states and reduce the barriers to license portability.

By passing SB0174, Maryland can join an active interstate licensure compact that will:

- Eliminate barriers to practice and client care while ensuring public protection.
- Improve access to professional social work services.
- **Support relocating military spouses, a key goal of the MMC.**
- Enhance public safety.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB0174** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Finance Committee.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers and survivors. Visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

We want to thank Senator Benson for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

David L. Dragics
COL (Ret), U.S. Army
Legislative Director



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars

SB174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact SSW

Uploaded by: Dean Judy Postmus

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in Favor of SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Thank you Senator Beidle, Senator Hayes, and all the members of the Finance Committee for addressing this critical workforce issue and therefore recognizing the vital role of social work. The University of Maryland, School of Social Work appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 174, which would allow Maryland's social workers to be part of an Interstate Compact and would extend this option for social workers that other health professionals currently hold in Maryland.

If SB 174 passes, Maryland could join the *Social Work Licensure Interstate Compact* and social workers would be eligible to apply for inclusion into a compact with other participating states. Currently, social workers must seek a separate license in each state/territory in which they wish to practice. An interstate compact is an important strategy for workforce development enabling social workers to practice in other compact member states without the need for multiple licenses.

Other advantages to participating in an interstate compact include: elimination of barriers to practice and increased access to care (especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care); improved continuity of care when clients travel or relocate; support for spouses of relocating active duty military personnel; elimination of the necessity for licenses in multiple states; employment opportunities for interstate practice for social workers; and enhanced interstate teletherapy. Participation in an interstate compact is especially critical to enhance teletherapy social work services. Currently, teletherapy may only be provided by a licensed Maryland social worker if the client is located in Maryland when the services are provided.

SB 174 would not restrict Maryland in any way to make changes for licensure in Maryland but would expand the employment opportunities for social workers who reside in Maryland. If in the future, Maryland were to eliminate the national test requirement from the licensing process and a Maryland Social Worker would still have the option to join the interstate compact– the individual social worker would be required to meet the requirements of the interstate compact, if different from their state requirements.

SB 174 also strengthens the profession of social work because other health professionals currently participate in their own interstate compacts and social workers do not have these career options. For example, in the 2021 legislative session, SB 571 *Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact*, passed allowing Maryland's licensed professional counselors access to their interstate compact and SB 174 would extend this same professional privilege for social workers and increase access to social work services.

Respectfully submitted by

Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW, Dean & Professor

cc: Senator Joanne C. Benson, sponsor of SB 174

SB 174 - FAV - House of Ruth.pdf

Uploaded by: Deena Hausner

Position: FAV



House of Ruth Maryland

Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

2201 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21218

(410) 554-8463 • Fax: (410) 243-3014 • www.hruth.org • dhausner@hruthmd.org

Bill No.: Senate Bill 174
Bill Title: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
Committee: Finance
Hearing Date: January 28, 2025
Position: **FAV**

House of Ruth is a non-profit organization providing shelter, counseling, and legal services to victims of domestic violence throughout the State of Maryland. House of Ruth has offices in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County. Senate Bill 174 would enter Maryland into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states. **We urge the Senate Finance Committee to favorably report on Senate Bill 174.**

Many survivors of intimate partner violence seek the support of social workers to deal with the myriad mental health issues that can arise as a result of experiencing domestic violence, including post-traumatic stress and depression. Therapy not only provides an opportunity for victims to overcome the effects of abuse after they have left the relationship; for some survivors, engaging in therapy helps them to feel empowered to leave a violent relationship and assists them in formulating plans to leave safely.

Some survivors have to flee to another state temporarily or permanently in order to achieve safety and extricate themselves from an abusive relationship. When survivors relocate to another state, under current law they are unable to continue to receive therapeutic support from the provider with whom they have been engaged. This removes a crucial element of their safety net and mental health support at a time when they are especially vulnerable.

Senate Bill 174 would enable survivors of intimate partner violence to maintain their therapeutic relationships even when they have to relocate to another state by making Maryland part of the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. By joining this compact, survivors of intimate partner violence will be able to maintain continuity of care with their social workers during critical transitions in their lives.

The House of Ruth urges the Senate Finance Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 174.

Ysern _SB174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Comp

Uploaded by: Iris Ysern Zarranz

Position: FAV

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

From: **Iris E. Ysern Zarranz, LCSW-C**
Ysern Therapy & Consulting, LLC

Re: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Date: January 24, 2025

**Dear Madam Chair Beidle and
Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:**

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Iris E. Ysern Zarranz, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

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. I strongly support The Compact as it provides several key benefits:

1. 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.
- It also ensures that clients can continue care with the same social worker if they move to another participating state.
- Clients would also be able to continue care while temporarily pursuing higher education at universities or career trainings outside the state, seeking other medical care out of state, as well as when their employment requires mandatory travelling.
- The Compact will promote continuity of care, particularly in the highly mobile DMV area. Clients often live and work in different states and need access to care in both.
- Continuity of care is always clinically recommended (yet currently highly restricted unless provider has additional licenses, as I have, which is costly and demanding).

2. 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 to maintain employment.
- It also supports their access to continuity of mental health care for all family members.

3. 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.

4. 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 move for personal or career reasons without the need for additional licensure.

5. Streamlined Processes:

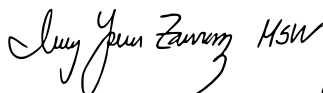
- The Compact creates a shared system of data and standards, which reduces administrative burdens for licensure boards, speeds up the application process, and ensures that state licensure standards are consistently met across participating states.

Witnessing and experiencing the significant benefits, both professionally and personally, from other existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact will ensure much needed enhancement licensure portability for practitioners. Simultaneously, it empowers state regulatory boards to better protect consumers by facilitating the seamless sharing of licensure information.

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 strongly urge you to lend your full support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, recognizing it is already clinically proven that it can have a positive impact on mental health service accessibility and continuity of care (as experienced during the emergency pandemic and for those of us licensed in additional states), as well as both the successful increased use of Telehealth and the implementation of other medical and behavioral health professions' compacts.

Sincerely,



Iris E. Ysern Zarranz

Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical

Iris@yserntherapyconsulting.com

State of Maryland License LCSW-C # 10442

Ysern Therapy & Consulting, LLC

16031 Comprint Circle,
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Montgomery County, Maryland

SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact -

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 174- Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Position: *Support*

January 28, 2025

Senate Finance Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 174.

Maryland hospitals continue to face a critical staffing shortage. MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future. Licensure compacts streamline the process, eliminating barriers and enabling health care workers to begin their roles in Maryland more quickly.

Hospitals employ social workers to support behavioral health patients and other vulnerable populations through case management, care coordination, and much more. Patients who face barriers transitioning out of the hospital to the next level of care—whether home or another setting—often rely on social workers to support them during this process. Pediatric patients experiencing hospital overstays rely on social workers to advocate for resources and support. As such, social workers provide invaluable care in their communities, as well as counsel and support to families whose loved ones are receiving health care services.

The [Social Work Licensure Compact](#) has reached activation status because it has been enacted in at least seven states. Maryland's participation in this compact could help alleviate the strain on our current workforce and help build a future pipeline.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 174.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Director, Government Affairs & Policy
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

SB174SUPPORT2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Klingler

Position: FAV

TO: Maryland General Assembly, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair
CC: Senator Joanne Benson, Bill Sponsor
FROM: Jennifer E. Klingler, LCSW-C
DATE: January 20th 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Honorable Chairperson Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for considering this written testimony in SUPPORT of SB 174, The Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

I have worked in the field of mental health since 1997, graduated with a Master of Social Work degree in 2001 and obtained advanced state licensure in 2003. I have worked in numerous settings including crisis response, outpatient treatment, inpatient hospital treatment and psychiatric research. I am now the owner a small women owned business Providing therapy and case management services in Baltimore, MD

Social workers are a key component of our country's mental health system, which is woefully lacking providers. I trust that the committee members are aware of the many ramifications of the consequences of inadequate access to treatment. The need for more access to professional licensed mental health care providers has never been greater.

The Interstate Compact increases the number of available clinicians, often concentrated in more populated areas, to areas with greater need and fewer clinicians. It would also allow providers to be able to offer their expert care to clients in participating states, where specialized services may not be as accessible.

I have a specialty in helping families affected by serious and persistent mental illness' such as Schizophrenia and Bipolar disorder. With early care and intervention, patient outcomes are improved, there are fewer strains on our hospital and legal systems, and reduced rates of disability. Families often contact me from other states asking for family therapy to help them and their loved one manage these conditions. These services can effectively be provided via telehealth. Location/distance are no longer barriers to obtaining expert care. However, without the Interstate Compact, I cannot provide them with any direct service. And so, families are they are often left with their underfunded and understaffed community mental health centers, few of which are able to provide extensive family therapy with experienced clinicians, if an appointment can be obtained at all.

Thank you, Senator Benson, for sponsoring this important piece of legislation again this year. I am grateful for the committee's consideration of my testimony in support of SB174 and urge you to vote in favor.

Sincerely,



600 Wyndhurst Ave, Suite 245E Baltimore, MD 21210

Office – 443-682-7780 Fax – 443-682-7781

Web – www.WillowBranchTherapy.com Email- Jennifer@WillowBranchTherapy.com

SB 174_ Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact_Su

Uploaded by: Jennifer LaHatte

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin Anderson | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: January 28, 2025
BILL NO: Senate Bill 174
BILL TITLE: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 174 facilitates interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving access to competent social work services. Under this bill, regulated social workers who hold or are eligible for an active, unencumbered license in the home state are eligible to practice social work in member states. Additionally, this legislation establishes a Licensure Compact Commission comprised of one delegate selected by the member state’s licensing authority, defines the role and voting rights of the Commission including disciplinary authority and provides a mechanism for withdrawing from the compact.

Background:

Twenty health occupation boards share responsibility for licensing health practitioners in Maryland. With a few exceptions, an individual must be licensed, certified, registered or permitted by the respective health occupation board before practicing in the State. Requirements for licensure, certification, registration and permitting vary by profession but typically require a combination of approved education, experience, examination, and a criminal history background check.

Currently, Maryland does not offer licensure reciprocity with other states for social workers. However, if you are licensed by another state, you may be able to obtain a Maryland social work license by endorsement. To be eligible, an applicant must hold a social work license that is equivalent to one offered by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (Board) and have passed an exam to receive that license. Documentation must be provided to the Board for applicants who have been licensed and practicing for at least 1,000 hours per year for the last 10 years and more extensive documentation is required by the Board if an applicant does not meet those criteria.

Rationale:

Passage of this bill will allow Maryland to improve access to licensure and licensure portability for social workers and meet the qualifications and definition of a military family-friendly state within the Department of Defense’s (DoD) Support of Military Families scorecard for states. These scorecards factor into future DoD basing decisions. The economic impact of Maryland’s military installations in FY 2021 was \$61.4B in payroll and expenditures. With 72% of military families living off-base in our communities, this bill will allow not only the ease of military

families gaining employment but will also contribute to the overall quality of life for all Marylanders by increasing the availability of licensed social workers in our communities.

In addition to license portability, DoD also strongly encourages states to adopt interstate compacts for occupational licensure. The Council of State Governments is partnering with DoD and the Association of Social Work Boards to support passage of social work licensure compacts nationwide. To date, legislation has passed in 22 states and has been introduced in 11 others including Maryland. Passage of SB 174 will keep Maryland competitive as a military family-friendly state and generally for occupational license portability.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.

LBH-SB174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Uploaded by: Jennifer Witten

Position: FAV



Date: January 28, 2025

To: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and Finance Committee Members

Reference: Senate Bill 174-Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Position: Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee,

On behalf of LifeBridge Health and Center for Hope, we appreciate the opportunity to comment and offer our support for Senate Bill 174. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital), a freestanding medical facility in West Baltimore; and Center for Hope a center of excellence focused on providing hope and services for trauma survivors in Baltimore City.

The Social Work Licensure Compact allows eligible social workers to practice in all states that join the compact. The goal is to eliminate barriers to practice and to client care along with ensuring public protection. An interstate compact is a legal contract between two or more states/territories that would enable social workers to practice in each other's jurisdiction, giving members of the profession more license mobility. The Social Work Licensure Compact will also enhance a state's ability to protect public safety.

LifeBridge Health along with Center for Hope and the Family Tree value our social worker team members who help support needs of our patients throughout our healthcare system and often in the community setting. They are critical members of our violence intervention program working with families and survivors of trauma. Given the ongoing healthcare workforce shortages and need to be flexible in recruiting professional social workers the Compact supports Maryland to remain competitive and welcoming. Maryland has adopted several similar healthcare compacts that have benefited our state in encouraging providers to practice in Maryland. Compacts add a level of expedited licensure process, does not circumvent the autonomy of the oversight board for ultimate review and discipline actions if needed.

For all the above stated reasons, we request a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 174.

For more information, please contact:

Jennifer Witten, M.B.A.

Vice President, Government Relations & Community Development

jwitten2@lifebridgedhealth.org

CARE BRAVELY

NASW Maryland - 2025 SB 174 FAV - Social Work Comp

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

Senate Bill 174

Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

*****SUPPORT*****

To the Honorable Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Social Workers Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) to express our strong support for Senate Bill 174, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. As the largest membership organization of professional social workers, NASW is committed to enhancing the professional growth of its members and advancing social policies that improve the well-being of individuals and communities. This compact, sponsored by Senator Benson, offers significant benefits for social workers and the individuals and families they serve across Maryland and beyond.

The Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact represents a critical step toward improving the mobility of social workers and expanding access to much-needed services. By allowing licensed social workers to practice in any member state, this compact eliminates unnecessary barriers, streamlines licensure processes, and ensures that services are available across state lines. This is particularly important for clients who relocate or travel frequently, such as military families, as well as individuals in underserved areas who may have limited access to qualified professionals.

Key Benefits of the Social Work Licensure Compact:

- **Enhances Social Worker Mobility:** Social workers can practice in any participating state, reducing the need for multiple state licenses and allowing professionals to serve clients without barriers.
- **Improves access to services:** The compact addresses workforce shortages by expanding the availability of qualified social workers, ensuring that individuals across participating states have access to the care they need.
- **Supports relocating military spouses:** Military families will benefit from quicker licensure recognition for social workers who are spouses of service members, minimizing delays in employment and client service.

(over)

- Ensures continuity of care: Clients who move or travel between states will continue to receive uninterrupted care, improving overall outcomes for individuals with long-term needs.
- Strengthens public safety: The compact maintains rigorous standards for licensure and establishes a national data system to track licensed professionals, ensuring public protection through transparency and accountability.
- Improves efficiency and reduces delays: By eliminating duplicative licensing processes, the compact reduces the time and costs associated with multiple licensure applications, ensuring quicker access to social work services.
- Encourages professional development: The compact provides opportunities for social workers to expand their professional expertise by practicing in multiple states and gaining exposure to diverse social work settings and practices.
- Encourages professionals to return to social work: The compact provides an incentive for individuals who have left the social work profession, particularly those who transitioned to counseling, to return to social work. With a similar compact in place for counseling, this streamlined licensure process across state lines creates an attractive opportunity for these professionals to re-enter the field and strengthen the workforce.

The NASW Maryland Chapter strongly urges the committee's support for Senate Bill 174. We respectfully ask that you give a favorable report to this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD

SW-letter-of-support-to-legislature.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Megredy

Position: FAV



In (FAV) of: Social Work Licensure Compact (SB0174 and HB0345)

January 24, 2025

I am Risa Garon, and I sincerely appreciate your efforts and commitment to improve and support our communities. I have been a licensed clinical social worker for almost 40 years. I founded, currently direct, and work with many families at the National Family Resiliency Center (NFRC), a nonprofit mental health center serving families in all Maryland communities, particularly Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. I'm reaching out to request your support for the Social Work Licensure Compact SB0174 and HB0345.

We are a universal community, and it is time we were supported by how our contemporary mental health system needs to work. Why terminate with a client because the client is moving out of state? Why should we not be permitted to help co-parents who would like to work with us but live in different states? Providing continuity of care is very valuable for citizens in our community. This legislation would allow us to work with other family members that clients want to work with who reside out of state.

Social workers in Maryland are carefully monitored and held accountable. This legislation will help our community's professionals and residents and the social work profession by building consistency and cooperation across states. The Social Work Licensure Compact law (SB0174 and HB0345) would allow social workers to reach more individuals in rural areas who are isolated and are in great need of mental health support, as well as provide consistency through a comprehensive list of licensed providers.

The work that social workers provided during Covid demonstrated the integrity and the needed contribution of social work care to help our state and nation. During Covid, it became apparent that we, as professionals, were competent to meet with our clients all over the country. We followed the Covid protocol and were able to help many clients in need.

Thank you for your consideration. I encourage you to vote in support of the Social Work Licensure Compact SB0174 and HB0345.

Risa Garon, *LCSW-C, BCD, CFLE*
Executive Director and Therapist
National Family Resiliency Center
10632 Little Patuxent Parkway Suite 325
Columbia, MD 21044
www.nfrchelp.org
410-740-9553 x203

Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.SB174.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa D Fisher

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair; and The Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Lisa D. Fisher, LCSW-C

DATE: February 22, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Senator Beidle, Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee and Senator Benson:

Thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact” for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Lisa D. Fisher, a Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical (LCSW-C) in Maryland, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Virginia, and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Delaware. I live in Harford County, Maryland.

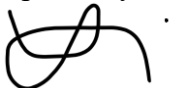
The significance of the Social Worker Interstate Licensure Compact resonates with me as a mental health professional due to the movement of clients – moving because of family needs, work relocation, cost of living, and any other meaningful reason to the client. The continuum of care is more critical than an abrupt termination of care. The interstate social work licensure compact will lessen the effects of termination and a “start all over again” for the client.

The ability to practice across state lines is like a driver’s license. I have a Maryland driver’s license in good standing. I can drive in the United States without limitations and follow each State’s law. It is the same with the interstate social work licensure. I must respect the law and obey the law.

When I was a graduate student, the tier explained to me was psychiatrist, psychologist, and licensed certified/clinical social worker. Whether this is accurate, other healthcare professions allow licensure portability for practitioners such as psychologists and nurses. Let’s allow the licensed, certified clinical social worker to do the same.

Thank you for your time, attention, and support to the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

Respectfully, I am,



Lisa D. Fisher, M.Ed., M. Div., BCC, LCSW-C
Maryland #21862
Virginia #0904016088
Delaware #Q1-0012465

Firestone HB345 SB 174 letter Jan 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Firestone

Position: FAV

Maryland General Assembly: **(FAV) Support for HB 345/SB 174**
Testimony by: Lori E. Firestone (therapist in private practice in Maryland)

January 23, 2025

To the Honorable Maryland Assembly House and Senate Committee members, I would like to express my support for HB 345/SB174, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. This legislation would **streamline the licensure process** to allow social workers to more effectively provide services across state lines. This not only benefits practitioners, but also **ensures that individuals in need of services can access qualified professionals**, irrespective of state boundaries. Other benefits include enhancing the mobility of social workers, improving continuity of care when clients travel or relocate, and more integrated data management for licensees for more efficient licensure verifications and other pertinent information about licensing status.

I wanted to provide a first-hand account of the challenges I have faced as a result of the current system with respect to social work licensure. Before moving to Baltimore in 2022, I lived in Washington, DC. This area is informally known as 'the DMV' because of **the District's proximity to both Maryland and Virginia**. It is very common for clients in this area to live in one state and work in another. A social worker is supposed to be licensed in the state where the session takes place. The majority of the time, clients would come to my office and there was no issue. However, a fair amount of my clients held professional jobs that required frequent travel and short term assignments. For example I have worked with clients employed by Peace Corps, the State Department, federal safety agencies, and various other high-profile positions. **Technically, by doing sessions when clients are out of area, we are in violation of the statutes.** This also holds true for phone calls when clients are not well enough to come in for sessions or on snow days. I have spoken with many colleagues and it is a risk we have incurred in the interest of continuity of care, however it is accompanied by a sense of internal conflict and anxiety that we do not need to carry.

Getting licensed in just three states is one issue. I have known colleagues to pay for and maintain their licenses in DC, Maryland and Virginia in order to be in compliance with the exceptions to in-office care. However, due to the pandemic and economic realities, many of our clients were forced to relocate out of state. These were not consolidated, but scattered across many jurisdictions. I personally had clients move to Pennsylvania, Maine, New Jersey, North Carolina, Illinois and Ohio. **I believe it is an unreasonable standard for social workers to maintain licensure in each individual state.** On the surface, it may seem logical to transfer our clients; however this does not take into consideration the complexities of the situation. Many of the people I work with have experienced serious depressive episodes with suicidal ideation, extreme anxiety/panic, trauma, grief and loss. It is hard for people to "start over" and even if they are willing, many discover a lack of available providers or extensive wait lists. **It would be disruptive at best, and traumatizing at worst, for these clients to find a new therapist**, especially when they are experiencing diminished capacities.

Finally, the second standard in the NASW Code, under the Ethical Responsibility to Clients section, states that social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination. I support my clients' right to choose to remain with the therapist with whom they have established a deep rapport and trust. In conclusion, I ask that you support HB 345/SB 174. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Lori E. Firestone, LCSW-C (MD), LICSW (DC), LCSW (VA)
Owner, Therapist
One City Wellness
(202) 437-0323
onacitywellness@gmail.com

SB 174 - BOSW - FIN - LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryland Department of Health /Office of Governmen oga

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Ave., 3rd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215

**2025 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO: SB 174
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill allows the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) to join an interstate license compact.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board supports SB 174.

An interstate social work compact will eliminate barriers to practice and increase access to care (especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care) by increasing the efficiency of becoming licensed across state borders. Currently, social workers must seek a separate license in each state in which they want to practice, which can be costly, as well as labor and time intensive. A compact creates a more efficient processing system, while protecting public safety. Nine professions currently have interstate compacts for regulating occupational licensing: Physicians, Nurses, EMS Officials, Physical Therapists, Psychologists, Audiology and Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Counselors.

22 states have already enacted legislation to join the Social Work Compact, including Virginia. By joining the Compact, Maryland Social Workers could more easily practice in neighboring states. Protection of the public would be enhanced through access to the Compact’s centralized database of disciplinary action records of other participating states.

Social workers practice in nearly all community settings, including schools, hospitals, behavioral health clinics, senior centers, prisons, child welfare and juvenile services, the military, corporations, courts, private practice, elected office and in numerous public and private agencies. Social workers provide urgently needed mental health and behavioral health services and help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem, such as homelessness or unemployment. Social workers serve on crisis response teams and assist victims of violence. They also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, involving child, family or other spousal abuse and neglect. Social workers conduct research, advocate for improved

services, and engage in systems design, manage nonprofits, or are involved in planning or policy development. Social workers provide these critically needed services every day.

The demand for social workers is expected to increase in coming years. Specifically, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that the employment of social workers will increase by twelve percent over the next decade. This expected increase is fifty percent more than the average expected for all occupations. There is expected to be a particularly significant need for child, family, and school social workers, healthcare social workers, and mental health and substance abuse social workers. There continues to be difficulty accessing social workers and other mental health and behavioral health providers in rural areas, especially specialists. Despite the invaluable contributions and services that social workers provide, the profession faces a recruitment and retention problem that is exacerbated by low starting salaries, high student loan debt and demanding day-to-day work loads, which can lead to burn out and social workers opting to leave the profession. For example, child welfare agencies across the country have 20-50% turnover rates for qualified social worker positions.

The compact provides a tool for addressing these workforce shortages and will strengthen Maryland's access to highly qualified social workers. It eases mobility for licensees and expands employment opportunities into new markets. It will also support relocating military spouses and families.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Social Work Examiners is respectfully requesting a favorable report on SB 174. If you require additional information please contact Karen Richards, Board Executive Director at (410) 764-4722 or karen.richards2@maryland.gov or Lillian Reese, Legislative Liaison at (443) 794-4757 or lillian.reese@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

SB174 BILL ADVOCACY 2025 MGLEASON.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Gleason

Position: FAV

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
From: Megan M. Gleason

RE: SUPPORT SB 174 – Social Work Compact

I am an LCSW-C. Please consider supporting the Social Work Interstate Compact. I am currently working with a client in college who leaves the area each summer and two clients who travel to other states regularly for work. I had to refer two clients to other providers because they moved from our area. The psychologists I know can provide their clients with continued support, yet I can't provide the same level of care while only holding licenses in Maryland, Washington, DC, and Massachusetts.

The Social Work Compact joins other health care Compacts (including PSYPACT, in which MD participates) and will benefit consumers, licensure boards, and the social work profession by:

- Providing a tool for addressing workforce shortages by allowing increased availability of mental health clinicians to care for vulnerable MD 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 by reducing 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: 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.

Thank you for all the work you do to benefit the citizens of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Gleason

240-205-5341

SB0174 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Kniffen

Position: FAV



2512 Chelmsford Drive, Crofton, Maryland 21114

Phone: 301-241-8069

Fax: 301-851-0920

megan@venuscounseling.com

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

SB174.pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Co

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Meghan Co, LCSW-C, LICSW

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Meghan Co, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Co', with a stylized flourish.

Meghan Co
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)
Montgomery County, Maryland

2025 MCHS SB 174 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Bill: Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Committee: Senate Finance

Hearing Date: January 28, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports Senate Bill 174 - *Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact*. The bill establishes a licensure compact for social workers, similar to other licensure compacts, social workers would be authorized to practice in all Compact member states under a multistate licensure.

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) is a network of federally qualified health centers that serve underserved communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Maryland. We are facing a crisis with the shortage of behavioral health professions in Maryland, with 21 of 24 jurisdictions designated as a mental health professional shortage area.ⁱ Licensure compacts and other reciprocity arrangements will allow Maryland providers to recruit health professionals, including social workers, from other states to provide in-person or telehealth services.

The Social Work Licensure Compact is modeled after similar compacts adopted in Maryland for professional counselors and psychologists. The legislation has passed in 22 states, including our neighboring state, Virginia.ⁱⁱ Additionally, legislation is pending in 10 other states including in Pennsylvania.

MCHS supports this bill because it will help federally qualified health centers and other providers to recruit social workers and meet the needs of our patients. We request a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>

ⁱⁱ <https://swcompact.org/compact-map/>

SB174.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Mills

Position: FAV

January 28, 2025

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Finance Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

SB174 enters Maryland into the Social Work Licensure Compact. The Social Work Licensure Compact would increase access to social workers by allowing reciprocity—social workers from other states can deliver care in Maryland and Maryland social workers would be able to deliver care to other states who are a part of the compact.

Serious shortages exist in the mental health professional workforce. The lack of providers exacerbates unmet needs and leaves more people without options for mental health care. It would be to the State's benefit to allow additional licensed social workers to practice in Maryland. The compact provides a tool for addressing workforce shortages—and with the severity of our workforce shortage, Maryland should utilize every tool in our toolbox to ensure access to mental health services.

By entering the compact, we are increasing the number of social workers in the State, who can, in turn, offer services to Marylanders who need them the most.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

DVMF SB174 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
Office of the Secretary

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY

Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
SUPPORT

January 22, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
Room 3, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for the military-connected communities. DVMF fulfills its mission through five core programs: the Service and Benefits Program, which helps veterans access federal, state, and local earned benefits; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, offering assisted living and skilled nursing care; the Cemetery and Memorial Program, providing dignified resting places and maintaining memorials honoring Maryland's veterans; the Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program, fostering connection and awareness; and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, offering financial assistance to veterans and their families in need. These programs reflect Maryland's commitment to honoring and empowering its military-connected community.

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families supports SB 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

DVMF believes SB 174 is an important legislation that represents a significant step forward in improving access to social work services for our military families, veterans, and underserved communities throughout Maryland.

SB 174 aligns closely with DVMF's mission to enhance the lives of military-connected individuals and their families by providing access to critical services and fostering pathways for meaningful employment. The bill's objectives to promote licensure portability, expand the use of telehealth, and address workforce shortages directly benefit our community in several impactful ways:

1. **Support for Military Families:** By allowing active-duty military members and their spouses to retain their social work licensure when relocating, the Compact eliminates significant

THE WINELAND BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR
16 FRANCIS STREET, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TOLL FREE: 866-793-1577 • ANNAPOLIS: 410-260-3838 • FAX: 410-216-7928

veterans.maryland.gov
TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

employment barriers for military spouses. This ensures continuity in their professional careers while providing much-needed mental health and social work services in Maryland.

2. **Improved Access to Services:** The Compact's facilitation of telehealth and interstate practice will enhance the availability of social workers for veterans and their families, particularly in rural or underserved areas where access to care can be challenging.
3. **Addressing Workforce Shortages:** By streamlining licensure requirements across states, the Compact enables Maryland to attract and retain a larger pool of qualified social workers, directly addressing gaps in service availability for vulnerable populations, including our state's veteran and military communities.
4. **Enhanced Public Safety and Accountability:** Through information sharing and cooperative oversight, the Compact ensures that social workers practicing in Maryland meet the highest professional standards, protecting the health and safety of those who rely on these essential services.

DVMF is dedicated to advancing initiatives that improve the well-being of our military and veteran families. SB 174 represents an innovative solution that will break down barriers, improve service delivery, and ensure that the heroes who have served our nation—and their families—receive the care and support they need.

Thank you for your attention to this important proposal and I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

NCADD-MD - 2025 SB 174 FAV - Social Work Compact -

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FAV



**Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2025**

**Senate Bill 174
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact**

Support

NCADD Maryland supports Senate Bill 174. The recent report called the *Maryland Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment*, conducted as a result of legislation passed by this committee, highlighted a critical shortage of behavioral health workers in the state. Maryland has about half the workforce necessary, with a growing gap projected in just the next few years.

Specifically looking at social workers and other counselors, the report found that 70% of people who graduate with master degrees do not work in the field in Maryland or in the field at all. While Maryland joining this multi-state compact will not magically fix this tremendous gap, it is a step that will help.

Joining the compact allow for employers to recruit social workers from other states who are also part of the compact. It will also allow social workers to continue their therapeutic relationships with clients who leave the state for another in compact, either temporarily for vacation or school, or permanently. With 22 states already joining the compact in just its first year, it is clear the compact is seen as a benefit to the profession and people in need of services.

We thank this committee for supporting this measure last year. NCADD Maryland believes it is imperative that Maryland not be left out of this important measure to partially address the severe workforce shortage in substance use disorder and mental health treatment.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 174.

SB 174_Horizon Foundation_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nikki Highsmith Vernick

Position: FAV



January 28, 2025

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

BILL: SB 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

POSITION: Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

The Foundation is pleased to support SB 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. This bill would enter Maryland into the existing Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, currently comprised of 22 states, and allow social workers to hold a multistate license in order to practice across state lines.

Like many communities across the country, mental and behavioral health needs in Howard County have been on the rise and barriers remain to ensuring robust and equitable access to care. In our county’s most recent health assessment, the number of residents who reported experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety jumped significantly compared to the last survey in 2018, and only 16% reported receiving some type of treatment.ⁱ We also continue to see stark racial disparities in mental health. In the same survey, Black and Hispanic residents were much more likely than their White counterparts to report feeling a lack of interest or pleasure in doing things – as were residents with low income – in addition to feelings of being down, depressed or hopeless. There is also growing research that shows chronic stress and trauma due to racism exacerbates mental and behavioral health challenges for people of color.

At the same time, Maryland has faced a behavioral health workforce shortage for many years, which exacerbates the lack of access to care for our residents. Many behavioral health providers have open positions that are going unfilled. There are simply not enough providers in Maryland to meet our residents’ mental and behavioral health needs. In fact, a recent report commissioned by the Maryland Health Care Commission found that Maryland needs to attract 30,000 new behavioral health workers in order to meet unmet needs and to account for current workers expected to retire, leave the state or leave the field in the next several years.ⁱⁱ

SB 174 would bolster our behavioral health workforce by making it easier for social workers from other states to practice in Maryland (and vice versa) and to provide services to

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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David Wolf

Lanlan Xu, Ph.D

Marylanders via telehealth. The Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact reduces the burden and duplicative licensure requirements for social workers to practice in multiple states. With more providers able to practice in our state, Marylanders will have greater access to the care they need.

We strongly believe everyone should have access to compassionate mental health care – and a strong behavioral health workforce is critical to making this a reality. For this reason, the Horizon Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 174** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ Howard County Health Assessment Survey, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.hclhic.org/community/data>

ⁱⁱ <https://marylandmatters.org/2024/12/02/maryland-needs-another-30000-behavioral-health-workers-to-meet-growing-demand/>

SB174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Testimony.p

Uploaded by: Nora Broendel

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Nora Broendel, LCSW-C

DATE: January 21, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Nora Broendel, a Licensed Certified Social Worker - Clinical (LCSW-C) practicing in College Park, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Additionally, as a clinician working with clientele including a significant proportion of UMD students, continuity of care would be greatly improved by the ability to practice across state lines. As students return to out-of-state homes on extended breaks or graduate and move out

of state, services must be temporarily discontinued or entirely terminated in order to comply with current licensure regulations.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nora Broendel, LCSW-C'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials 'NB' being prominent.

Nora Broendel
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)

SB174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.RZ.

Uploaded by: Rachel Zubek

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Rachel Zubek, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement supporting Senate Bill 174 on the "Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact" for inclusion in the public hearing record. I am Rachel Zubek, a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) residing and practicing in Baltimore, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. We are still in a mental health emergency and the need for therapists/counselors is high and continues to grow. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

Rachel Zubek

Rachel Zubek
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C), Founder/Owner
New Growth Counseling
Baltimore City, Maryland

Testimony in support of SB0174- Interstate Social

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0174_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
1/28/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0174 - FAVORABLE
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance health workers over the next few years to keep the state fully staffed and fight off attrition.

- The number comes from a report commissioned by the Maryland Health Care Commission and presented to the state's Medicaid Advisory Board.
- Maryland currently has about 35,000 behavioral health care workers but is short about 18,200 of what is needed to meet that state's needs.
- Over the next few years, about 14,500 of those professionals will retire or leave their job, widening the gap as less people are entering the field.

The intent of this bill is to give Maryland a path that helps close this gap in available social workers for our state. The bill has Maryland entering into the Social Work Licensure Compact for the purpose of authorizing regulated social workers who hold multistate licenses to practice social work in member states in order to improve public access to competent social work services. It protects Maryland by establishing requirements for multistate licensure. This would be accomplished by establishing the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission, providing for withdrawal from the Compact; and providing the Act is contingent on the enactment of substantially similar legislation in six other states.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland quote the Department of Legislative Services *2024 Issue Papers*: "The mental health needs of adults and children have remained elevated or underserved since the pandemic."¹ This bill will help Maryland address this issue.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0174.

¹ https://www.lwvmd.org/behavioral_health_issue_paper_2024

2025 TCC SB 174 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Hearing Date: January 28, 2025

Position: Support

The Coordinating Center supports *Senate Bill 174 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact* because it supports continuity of care for our clients. The bill would allow licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) in Maryland to provide services to clients in other compact states without obtaining a separate license. This legislation has been enacted in 20 states, including our neighboring state of Virginia.

Our organization provides care coordination services to nearly 10,000 Marylanders annually to individuals enrolled Maryland Medicaid programs, including home and community-based service waivers and other programs such as the Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM) program. We serve a significant number of individuals living with complex medical needs, and as such our clients sometimes need to be hospitalized out-of-state for specialty care. If Maryland participated in the Social Work Licensure Compact, our LCSWs would be able to coordinate care for clients as the travel for any reason, including medical care, without fear of licensure repercussions. The Compact would support The Coordinating Center and other providers in ensuring the continuity of care for our clients.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information that is helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

SB174_SponsorTestimony

Uploaded by: Senator Benson

Position: FAV

JOANNE C. BENSON
Legislative District 24
Prince George's County

MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee

Pensions Subcommittee

Joint Committees

Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson
SB 174 An Act Concerning the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact”

Good afternoon, Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Anthony Hayes, and Esteemed Members of the Committee. I am here today to express my strong support for An Act Concerning the “Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.”

In recent years, professions have been using interstate compacts to facilitate occupational licensing reciprocity among states. We, the Maryland General Assembly, have passed similar compacts for other health occupations, including nurses, psychologists, licensed professional counselors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists.

The purpose of this bill is to have Maryland join the 22 other states that in just its first year, joined the multi-state social worker compact.

The Compact’s goals are to:

- eliminate barriers to practice and to client care along with ensuring public protection
- give social workers mobility and support relocating military spouses
- improve access by consumers, and improve continuity of care when clients travel or relocate

Importantly, a compact license gives employers the ability to recruit social workers from other states. This is certainly important when our neighboring states adopt this Compact. Virginia has joined, and Pennsylvania and New Jersey also have legislation pending.

Here in Maryland, a new study shows that we have half of the needed workforce to address current needs related to people seeking help for behavioral health issues. Joining the compact will not solve the whole problem but will help to address it.

States that join the Compact gain an additional layer of oversight of social workers who may enter their state to practice. The data system will allow member states to verify instantaneously that social workers based in other states have met defined standards and competencies and are in good standing with other states’ regulatory boards. The Compact data system will help states better protect the public.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to make Maryland the 23rd state in the nation to join the Social Worker Compact Act by providing a favorable vote.

Senate Bill 174 Interstate Compact Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelby John

Position: FAV

Senator Pamela Beidle
Senate Finance Committee (Chairperson)

House Bill 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact Senate Finance Committee.

January 28, 2025 at 1:00p.

Position: SUPPORT

Submitted by: Wholistic Living LLC

Wholistic Living LLC is a private clinical mental health practice specializing in trauma, addictions, and anxiety. We utilize EMDR therapy to address the multifaceted needs of individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges (collectively referred to as behavioral health).

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 174. This critical legislation proposes that Maryland join the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact, enabling social workers licensed in Maryland to practice across state lines in other compact member states, and vice versa. This initiative is essential to addressing the profound behavioral health crisis currently affecting our state.

As a clinician, I have witnessed firsthand the growing and urgent demand for mental health services. My practice has seen a marked increase in referrals, particularly for neurologically based trauma care such as EMDR therapy. Despite my best efforts to meet the community's needs, I now maintain a waiting list of over 10 individuals and am inundated with consultation calls. Sadly, many of these individuals must wait weeks—or even months—for care during a time when timely intervention can make all the difference.

The behavioral health crisis in Maryland is not anecdotal—it is documented and escalating. A recent report, "Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent," highlights that in 2023, Maryland employed approximately 34,613 behavioral health workers, yet faced a shortfall of 18,222 professionals needed to meet current demands. By 2028, an additional 14,565 workers will be required to keep pace with growing demand, with attrition rates exacerbating the issue.

The challenge is particularly acute among social workers. In 2023, Maryland employed an estimated 2,799 social workers in behavioral health settings. To meet the growing need and replace those leaving the field, we will need to attract an additional 2,675 social workers by 2028—a staggering number that cannot be achieved under the current system.

Compounding this issue is a troubling trend in education and retention. Degree completions from Maryland's social work master's programs have declined by 9% since 2019, and far too many graduates are either leaving the state or working outside the behavioral health field entirely. Since 2014, 70% of Masters of Social Work and Clinical and Counseling Psychology graduates from Maryland universities have not been retained in jobs providing behavioral health services to Maryland residents.

The General Assembly has taken commendable steps in recent years to address these issues, but the crisis remains far from resolved. We must be bold and innovative in our approach to expanding access to care and supporting the behavioral health workforce. Interstate licensure compacts are a proven strategy that can yield immediate and meaningful results.

By passing SB 174, we can:

- **Broaden the pool of qualified professionals** who can provide care to Maryland residents.
- **Strengthen partnerships across state lines**, allowing for a seamless delivery of care in an increasingly mobile and interconnected world.
- **Provide Marylanders with access to timely, high-quality mental health and substance use care**, ensuring they are not left waiting for help during their most vulnerable moments.

The need for SB 174 is both practical and moral. Our communities are in crisis, and every day that passes without action is another day that countless Marylanders go without the care they so desperately need.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 174. The health and well-being of our residents depend on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For further information contact: Shelby John, 410-937-1386

Starling Hathcock SB174 Interstate Social Work Lic

Uploaded by: Starling Hathcock

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Joanne C. Benson

FROM: Starling Butler Hathcock, LCSW-C

DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 174 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Beidle and Distinguished Members of the Finance Committee:

I sincerely thank you for considering my written statement in support of Senate Bill 174 on the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact for inclusion in the public hearing record. My name is Starling Hathcock, and I am a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) and the spouse of a Navy veteran. I reside and practice in Frederick County, Maryland.

The significance of the Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact resonates deeply with me due to the substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the limited number of licensed providers available to deliver ethical and safe care. The rigorous education and training received by mental health professionals, irrespective of state, coupled with mandatory continued education post-licensure, underscore the dedication to maintaining high standards in our field. Last year, I shared how this Compact could benefit three specific clients and 1000's like my clients. Sadly, I can no longer speak to how those clients are doing because Maryland currently lacks a Social Work Compact, limiting my ability to follow their progress.

Today, I want to share how this Compact would benefit me and countless others who have had to retell the intimate details of their trauma.

Not only am I a therapist in Frederick, but I am also a therapist currently in therapy here in Maryland. I am a survivor of sexual trauma, and my journey into the therapeutic world began long before I became a social worker. My first therapist was extraordinary. Without her support, I likely would not be sitting here today.

Unfortunately, our therapeutic relationship ended before my healing could truly begin—when my family relocated to another state. This painful cycle repeated with each move, as licensing barriers prevented me from continuing care with the same trusted professional. Each time, I was forced to rebuild rapport, trust, and support with a new therapist—a process that can feel overwhelming and deeply discouraging. For trauma survivors like me, retelling our story to a new therapist is uniquely challenging, as it requires revisiting painful experiences and navigating the emotional, psychological, and relational complexities that trauma leaves behind.

In 2009, my family finally relocated to Maryland. Since then, I have been fortunate to find a therapist I trust—a relationship I have maintained for years. Yet, even now, barriers remain.

When I travel out of state, I must cancel therapy sessions because my therapist is licensed only in Maryland. This underscores the ongoing limitations faced by individuals seeking continuity of care across state lines.

The Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact would be a pivotal step in addressing this issue. It would ensure continuity of care for both clients and social workers who move or travel due to family obligations, military service, or other life circumstances. By preserving the vital therapeutic relationship, the Compact would reduce the stigma and burden of repeatedly retelling traumatic histories and foster better outcomes for all involved.

The ability to practice across state lines is pivotal in addressing disparities in access to culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. Doing so can alleviate inequities related to socioeconomic status, (dis)ability status, gender diversity, sexuality, and other barriers that impede individuals from receiving adequate care. Clearing barriers holds particular importance in advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring they receive treatment and support, especially when in-person appointments may be challenging or finding a suitable clinician becomes a hurdle, such as during a pandemic.

Drawing inspiration from existing licensure compacts for various healthcare professions, including nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and counselors, the Social Work Compact enhances licensure portability for practitioners. 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 passionately urge you to lend your 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S.H.", written in a cursive style.

Starling Hathcock
Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C)
Frederick County, Maryland



MATOD - 2025 SB 174 FAV - Social Work Compact - Se

Uploaded by: Teron Powell

Position: FAV



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www.matod.org

SB 174 Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact Support Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2025

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD), a statewide organization representing over sixty-five healthcare organizations throughout the state promoting high-quality, effective medications for opioid use disorders is pleased to provide support for SB 174.

MATOD wholeheartedly supports SB 174 which would allow for a Social Work Licensure Compact across states. This bill would reduce the overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with requiring social workers to hold multiple licenses in different states and increase the public's access to competent social workers while assisting in alleviating the behavioral health workforce shortage in Maryland.

It has become increasingly difficult to hire clinical staff in behavioral health programs across the state of Maryland and social workers are uniquely trained to address chronic and severe behavioral health disorders. Social workers empower clients with advocacy, resources, goals, psychosocial assessments, and counseling. With the help of social workers, clients in opioid treatment facilities can begin their journey towards sobriety and stability.

If passed, the Social Work Licensure Compact across states would allow the social work profession to enjoy the same benefits of a compact as our colleagues who are licensed professional counselors and therapists in Maryland.

For the reasons stated in this letter, we urge the members of the committee to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Vickie L. Walters, LCSW-C

Vickie L. Walters, MSW, LCSW-C
Public Policy Committee
Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.