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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**House Bill 345 – Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact
 Health and Government Operations Committee – January 23,
 2025
 SUPPORT**

Background: HB345 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 HB345.

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.