

Dentistry For Kids
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Written Testimony for 2/18/25

To: The House Health and Government Operations Committee
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
241 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 534 Interstate Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensure Compact – SUPPORT

Dear Madame Chair and Health and Government Operations Committee:

I am Dr. Shari Kohn, a board-certified Pediatric Dentist in Maryland. I am representing the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners in **SUPPORT of HB 534** – The Interstate Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensure Compact.

Of the two compacts being presented today, this compact, HB 534, has the most protection for the citizens of Maryland. It grants the Dentist and Dental Hygienist an actual **license** to practice in our state.

My two main position of support with HB 534 are: 1. The licensee graduates from a **CODA** (Commission on Dental Accreditation) approved Program. And 2. A **“hands on” clinical examination** is mandatory for licensure. Both of these criteria are current requirements for licensure in the state of Maryland.

CODA serves the public and dental professions by developing and implementing accreditation standards that promote and monitor the continuous quality and improvement of dental education programs. CODA is the gold standard in dental education.

The opposing bill HB 45 uses language in item in Section 3 A (7) “accept the national board examinations of the joint commission on national dental examinations **OR another** examination

accepted by the commission rule as a licensure examination.” Section 3 A (8) “accept for licensure that applicants for a dentist license graduate from a predoctoral dental education program accredited by CODA **or another** accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education for the accreditation of dentistry and dental hygiene education programs.” When the word **OR or OTHER** is written in a law – any exam can be developed, at any time, that the commission deems acceptable BUT the states may NOT feel is sufficient. The state would have no say in this matter. This is too broad and can lead to **non-qualified dental personnel practicing in Maryland**. In addition, what are these **OTHER** programs? What are their requirements? Don’t we want the **BEST** for the state of Maryland? These are non-descript definitions. Proper education is of paramount importance.

Currently in order to practice dentistry in the US, foreign-trained dentists must meet the requirements of the state board of dentistry. The HB 534 compact is in agreement with this standard.

The American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX) has developed an exam that is considered to be the most comprehensive in BOTH didactic and hand skill examinations. “ADEX Dental and Dental Hygiene Examinations evaluate candidates’ **psychomotor skills** and didactic performance for entry-level practice.

The American Board of Dental Examiners is comprised of representatives from member jurisdictions’ boards. Nearly all US states participate ADEX Membership gives a recognizing state dental board direct involvement in the development and evolution of the examinations through committee appointments; and approval of the final form of the examinations in dentistry and dental hygiene.”

Since this compact allows the applicant to obtain an actual license from the state of Maryland – it allows the state dental board to require that the holders of this license satisfy Maryland’s educational requirements and continuing educational requirements.

HB 534 will allow the state board to do its job – to protect the citizens of Maryland. Not only will we be able make certain that our dental professionals have the proper educational requirements but we will also be able to conduct disciplinary actions against any licensee as needed.

Lastly, I feel that we are responsible for the well-being and safe care all of Maryland’s citizens. As a Pediatric Dentist, this is especially true for the children of our state – often one of the most vulnerable populations. Pediatric Dentists employ the use of Nitrous Oxide, sedation, general anesthesia in a hospital setting, and other behavior management techniques. I am aware that many other states take these treatment alternatives less seriously than we do in Maryland. We have strict guidelines and permits are needed in our state to perform these services and obtain these privileges. I would be fearful of someone from another state, country or territory, who does not possess the proper training or certification to work on **my child or yours**. There is no defined language or rule in the HB 45 compact as to whether or not privileged dental

professionals need to obtain said permits or certificates to perform these procedures in our state, if they already hold a less arduous certificate, from their state of origin. HB 534 requires any dentist or dental hygienist to obtain all necessary permits – just as any current licensee in Maryland would.

It is the hope of any compact, that more dentists and hygienists will come into our state and help with access to care. Our neediest patients, those on medicaid, may benefit from this compact because in order to participate in medicaid, the EPREP application requires you to list your license number. In HB 45 compact, dental professionals do have license numbers only privileges in our state. This would not help access to care for children OR with the new adult medicaid program as it precludes HB 45 dentists from participating in medicaid due to their lack of licensure.

HB45 is NOT in the best interest of YOUR constituents. It is definitely NOT consistent with the high standards of excellence we currently enjoy in our great state.

While we all agree that facilitating the interstate practice of dentistry and dental hygiene is important, we MUST agree that we need to do this **SAFELY** and with the citizens of Maryland protected.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote in **Support of HB 534** –The Interstate Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensure Compact.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shari C. Kohn
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Executive Committee – Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
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Diplomat - American Board of Pediatric Dentistry
Fellow - American College of Pediatric Dentistry
Fellow – International College of Pediatric Dentistry
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