

TO: The Honorable Joselyn Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Ken Kerr & Jamila Woods

FROM: Julia Webb, LCSW-C

DATE: January 23, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – House Bill 345- Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Madam Chair, Pena-Melnyk and Distinguished Members of the House and Government Operations Committee:

Thank you for accepting my written statement endorsing HB 345 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