

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

FROM: Stephanie Walker, 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:

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,

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