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TESTIMONY ON HB0345 POSITION: FAVORABLE
Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Danielle Herrmann, LCSW-C, Maryland License #17654

My name is Danielle Herrmann and I am a resident of District 20, in Takoma Park. As a Maryland licensed clinical social worker I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0345, Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. During the COVID pandemic Maryland was exemplary in establishing tele-therapy services to address the dire need for access to mental health therapists. This has enabled me to provide tele-therapy services across our state. The Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact is an essential outgrowth to continue to improve and advance access to social work services for Maryland residents.

Many of my clients regularly travel out of state for their jobs, or need to provide emergency care for an out-of-state family member, or leave for several months to seek specialty clinical medical care not available in Maryland. Sometimes they must live part of the year in a neighboring state for college, or even move for temporary employment. Every new client tells me how long the wait has been and how difficult it was to find a Maryland therapist who is accepting new clients and has the specific clinical expertise they need. While Maryland social workers are doing all we can and the State of Maryland supports initiatives to educate more social workers, we know that without the Social Work Multistate Licensure Compact our state will continue to suffer from a terrible shortage of qualified licensed social workers.

As a clinical and medical social worker, I have witnessed the deleterious effects of delayed psychotherapy treatment as well as the adverse disruption in continuity of care specifically due to the lack of having a multistate license. Based on current trends Maryland needs 300,000 behavioral health workers. It is imperative we address this shortage or we will continue to struggle with staggering consequences. The National Association of Social Workers recognizes that access to mental health and social work services is essential to a stable life, mental well-being, and the health and safety of all of us. The Social Work Licensure Compact would vastly improve public access to competent social work services and strengthen our State.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0345.