

Dear Legislators;

I am a school psychologist in Maryland and I wish to voice my support for the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists. School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. In collaboration with families and other school staff, we help create safe and supportive learning environments in which all students can thrive. I currently work with our youngest learners in our district preschool classrooms, as well as community preschools, to help learners develop strong foundational social emotional and early learning skills.

I currently work in Harford County Public Schools which serves students who reside within Harford County and military families who are stationed at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Working with our young learners allows me the opportunity to work with not only the students but also the families to navigate their first experience with early intervention and special education services.

The Interstate Compact for School Psychologists would significantly benefit our state, and me personally as a school psychologist. I began my graduate school program just after my husband began his military career in New York. I was lucky to have a very supportive program and faculty who allowed me to split my internship year between states when my husband received temporary orders for a new base in a new state. Following my internship, I began my own career as a school psychologist in another new state, Virginia. As a young Army officer, my husband's assignments changed frequently, receiving new military assignments yearly. We were lucky that a few of the initial assignments kept us in Virginia and allowed me to continue working for a few years, however once we moved out of Virginia, I put my career on hold. Attempting to transfer my license was difficult and although I had my National Certification, the next state did not accept it. I would have loved to continue my career as my husband continued his, but the process to transfer my license to each state was long and difficult with each state's specific regulations. We arrived in Maryland towards the end of my husband's military career for what was potentially a 2-3 year assignment at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Once finding out we were able to extend our time in Harford County I worked on reinstating my National Certification. Although having my National Certification made licensure in Maryland easier, having an Interstate Compact for School Psychologists would help those that don't have National Certification and may have allowed me to continue my career as we moved frequently. My husband retired after 20 years in the Army a little over a year ago and although we have remained in Maryland for now, this may not be our forever home. Having an Interstate Compact for School Psychologists would allow me and other school psychologists to more easily transfer a license between states. With the shortages of school psychologists across the country and the opportunity to work remotely, providing an easier route to licensure would only help the profession. Importantly, this Compact promotes efficiency while upholding a high standard of school psychology practice.

I urge you to support this legislation.

*Laura Lenker*, School Psychologist