



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 959: School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact
February 24, 2025

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee, I humbly come before you today to offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 959: School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact**. This compact, developed by the Council of State Governments, presents an innovative and practical solution that complements our State's efforts to address school support staff shortages in Maryland, while providing a direct benefit to military families and other families relocating to Maryland for new opportunities.

The shortage of school psychologists is a pressing concern nationwide, including in Maryland. These professionals play a crucial role in providing mental health support, behavioral interventions, and academic assessments for students. Licensed professionals, such as school psychologists, who move from state to state often struggle with the process of obtaining licenses in their new state. No group is more affected by frequent moves than military families, who are on average reassigned to a new station every 2-3 years. The time and expense associated with obtaining a new license creates an immense financial burden on these families, while impeding Maryland's efforts to recruit new school psychologists.

On January 5, 2023, President Biden signed the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022, which added the "Portability of Professional Licenses of Service Members and their Spouses" section to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. This provision calls for states to ensure that servicemembers and their spouses are able to use their professional licenses and certificates in new jurisdictions when they must relocate due to military orders. **House Bill 959** is the answer to this call by moving Maryland into the **School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact**.

Currently, Colorado and West Virginia are members of the Compact, and ten additional states—including Oregon, North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Georgia, New Jersey, Florida, and Alabama—have introduced legislation this session to join. The Compact will officially take effect once seven states enact legislation. By acting now, Maryland has an opportunity to be a leader in shaping the Compact's implementation and governance. Early adoption ensures that Maryland has a seat at the table when bylaws and operational procedures are established, positioning our state as a key player in defining the future of licensure portability for school psychologists.

House Bill 959 is a forward-thinking solution that strengthens Maryland's school psychologist workforce, supports military families, and aligns with national efforts to streamline professional licensure. By removing barriers to practice, we ensure that students receive the psychological and academic support they need while reinforcing Maryland's leadership in education policy.

Bernice Mireku-North