



**CSG Testimony on SB 18
Senate Finance Committee
February 6th, 2026**

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Members of the committee, my name is Kaitlyn Bison, a Senior Policy Analyst with The Council of State Governments. My written testimony is meant to provide background educational information that may be useful as legislators consider SB 18.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is a nonpartisan membership association for elected and appointed state officials from all three branches of government. CSG, through its National Center for Interstate Compacts (NCIC), has facilitated the development process for all twenty-one of the active occupational licensing compacts.

SB 18 authorizes the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners to establish alternate pathways from conditional to full licensure by removing the requirement that applicants pass the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) examination prior to receiving full licensure. Under the bill, passage of the ASWB exam would no longer be a prerequisite for beginning practice at the BSW and MSW levels in Maryland.

As you know, in 2024, Maryland enacted the Social Work Licensure Compact (SW Compact). Like the Nurse Licensure Compact, the SW Compact utilizes a multistate license which allows licensed social workers to practice in other compact member states. Membership in the SW Compact does not prevent participating states from creating alternate pathways for licensure. The project team that drafted the compact, which included regulators, professionals, and educators, took care to preserve state authority to develop different licensure pathways for “in-state” practice.

Requirements for a multistate license relies on the commonality found among the states. One of these multistate license requirements is the passage of a qualifying national exam. The Social Work Compact Commission has designated the ASWB examination as the qualifying national examination required for compact eligibility.

This designation does not prohibit member states from creating alternate pathways for licensure – many member states have alternate pathways for licensure. It merely means that individuals licensed through an alternate pathway would not automatically meet the requirements for a compact multistate license. A Maryland licensee wishing to use the SW Compact to practice in other compact member states, would need to meet the



requirements for a multistate license described in the compact. One of the requirements is the ASWB Exam.

This information is provided for the sole purpose of clarity as you consider SB 18. We would be happy to clarify further or answer any questions you may have and apologize that we could not attend the hearing.