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March 23, 2026

RE: SUPPORT for HB 340 / SB 238 – School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact
Position: Favorable

Dear Chairman Feldman,, Vice Chair Kagan, Senator Augustine, and Honorable Members of Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing pediatric nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2021 one in every five children ages 3-17 had a mental, emotional, or behavioral health diagnosis. Only 20% of children with a mental health diagnosis receive treatment and over 75% of treatment is provided by school-based providers (American Academy of Pediatrics, n.d.; Lyon et al., 2016).

In Maryland there is only 1 school psychologist for every 1,066 students enrolled according to data published to CBS News (2024). School-based mental health services strategically address barriers such as transportation, stigma, and schedule conflicts that would lead to time missed from school by the student or from work by the guardian (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2025; National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2025)

I am writing to urge a **favorable report** on **HB 340 / SB 238**, which would enter Maryland into the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact. By reducing barriers to licensure portability, this legislation is a fiscally responsible tool to address workforce shortages, increase access to mental and behavioral health services, support our military families, and leverage Maryland's competitive standing to attract high-quality talent.

Supporting Military Families and Fiscal Responsibility:

Current licensure barriers place an undue burden on military spouses, who often face unemployment or underemployment due to lengthy credentialing processes when relocating. According to the National Council of State Legislatures (2021), reciprocity and portability are critical benefits that can directly alleviate these challenges.

For legislators prioritizing fiscal responsibility, the economic impact of the status quo is stark. A study by Blue Star Families found that "unemployment, underemployment, and reduced labor force participation among military spouses cost the U.S. economy almost \$1 billion per year" (National Council of State Legislatures, 2021). By passing this Compact, Maryland can take a definitive step toward reducing this economic waste and supporting the families who serve our country.



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A Proven Model: Success of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact

We do not need to guess if interstate compacts work; we have proof from right here in Maryland. The state has already seen significant success after joining the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC). According to a recent report, "over 17% of all new licenses issued to physicians in 2022 were done via the IMLC process" (Maryland Board of Physicians, 2023, p. 5). This data demonstrates that when Maryland lowers administrative barriers, we experience a net increase in the number of licensed professionals available to serve our population. **HB 340/SB 238** applies this same successful logic to our mental health and education workforce.

Leveraging Maryland's Competitive Advantage

Maryland is already a highly attractive destination for school psychologists, but administrative hurdles prevent us from fully capitalizing on this advantage. According to reports from **Forbes (2022)**, Maryland ranked among the top 10 states for school psychologist annual pay. Furthermore, **2024 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics** indicates that Maryland ranked in the top 4 for annual salaries nationwide for school psychologists (data available at bls.gov/oes/tables.htm).

We offer some of the most competitive salaries in the nation, yet we stand lose qualified talent because they cannot easily transfer their credentials. This bill removes the "red tape" that keeps qualified professionals out of our state, allowing Maryland to see a return on investment for its competitive wage structures.

Increasing Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Services

As mentioned previously, access to mental and behavioral health services is limited, my family waited 22 months after time of referral to receive an evaluation. While we waited, we called several local healthcare systems and were provided waitlist times as long as three years. Unfortunately, our family's experience is not unique. While families wait for evaluations, their children may be disciplined for behaviors that are disability-related, removed from school or dismissed from childcare thereby increasing the risk of parents being terminated from their jobs or having to exit the labor force to caretake for school-aged children.

The School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact is a common-sense solution that supports military families, has the potential to increase access to school-based mental and behavioral health services, follows a proven model of success, and capitalizes on Maryland's economic strengths.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of this critical workforce legislation. I urge a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, RN, CPNP-PC, BCPA, PMP
Resident, Howard County, MD