

Submitter: Ann Martin
On Behalf Of: Ann Martin
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2554

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House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for HB 2554 – Social Work Licensure Compact

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair's Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ann Martin, and I am a licensed clinical social worker in Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2554, which would allow Oregon to join the Social Work Licensure Compact.

I have been a social worker since 2000 and am a 4th generation Oregonian. I practice social work in Central Oregon and provide therapy to patients primarily in that area, but I also have patients that move out of that area and want to continue to meet with me for counseling services. I primarily provide in-person services, but it is in the best interest of the clients to continue to meet with their already established therapist if they move to another area in Oregon or another state. . It is hard for clients to find therapists who have openings in a timely manner, and it is hard for clients to have to start over with their therapy, so to be able to stay with their current therapists decreases barriers for clients to get their mental health needs met.

Continuing with their current therapist ensures continuity of care and clients can continue with the growth they have made with a trusted provider. I have had to get licenses in several other states to aid clients in their mental health treatment. It is an expensive, time consuming and long process to get these licenses.

Like many of my colleagues, I have witnessed firsthand the growing demand for social work services in our state. Burnout is at an all-time high, and we simply do not have enough social workers to meet the needs of all Oregonians. By joining the compact, we can help address this crisis by making it easier for qualified professionals to work in Oregon, reducing barriers to licensure, and expanding the social work workforce.

This bill would also provide much-needed relief for existing social workers by increasing our professional mobility. Many of us have family in other states or want the flexibility to work across state lines through telehealth. HB 2554 would streamline this process and ensure that Oregon remains a competitive and attractive place for social workers.

I strongly urge you to support this legislation so that Oregon can take a crucial step toward addressing our social work shortage and improving access to care. Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at 541-504-8970.

Thank you,

Ann Martin, LCSW