

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

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February 19, 2025

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 Kathy Link and I am a licensed 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 started my social work career in North Carolina and moved to the state of Oregon in 2021. I have experience as a hospice social worker, and since the pandemic have worked as a telehealth mental health therapist, working mostly as a grief counselor. I was an LCSW in North Carolina, and went through a bunch of steps to become an LCSW in Oregon. I am grateful for the process that Oregon has - I truly am, and at the same time, it felt like there was a lot of redundancy in what I did to obtain two state 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.

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.

Sincerely,  
Kathy