

February 19, 2025

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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 Alissa Kaasa, and I recently moved to Oregon and am licensed in both Oregon and Minnesota. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2554, which would allow Oregon to join the Social Work Licensure Compact.

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 have personally experienced the stress and disruption of the current system and seen how it negatively impacts clients. I have a group private practice in Minnesota and recently relocated to Portland to be closer to family which means I had to navigate the process of being licensed in two states. It is expensive, time consuming, and confusing. Luckily I gave myself plenty of time and have the funds to pay for licensure costs but not everyone is able to do that. Having a compact would hugely help practitioners manage our practices and support our clients without disruption in services. I have also worked with many clients who have relocated and had to terminate services because of being out of state. This seems unethical to me especially when therapist have very long waitlists. Having the flexibility to see clients wherever they are at would help decrease stress and mental health flare ups.

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,
Alissa Kaasa, LCSW MSW
Therapist and Managing Partner