

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

Members of the committee, my name is Phoebe Souza. I live in Portland, OR (proud resident of District 42), and I work for a digital health company specializing in oncology supportive care as both a social work manager and licensed clinical social worker. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2554.

In addition to increasing access to specialized mental health care, I am advocating in support of Oregon joining the social work compact as the administrative burden, time, and financial toxicity of applying for and maintaining licensure in numerous states is extensive. I am currently licensed in 20 states and even with a third-party company that helps manage these licenses, I am spending at minimum two weeks of work annually completing administrative tasks related to continuing education and maintaining these licenses, time that would be much better spent caring for patients.

I strongly believe that the stress from our work should be in delivering the highest quality clinical care, and not in managing state bureaucracies and complex licensure requirements. Seeing Oregon join the 22 other states in the compact and 15 with pending legislation will also help to retain mental health therapists in the state of OR by allowing them to hold licenses elsewhere while serving OR clients.