

**Kristina Roegner**  
State Senator  
27<sup>th</sup> Senate District



## **Sponsor Testimony**

Senate Bill 90

Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 90, which upon enactment would join Ohio to the “Social Work Licensure Compact.” Senate Bill 90 passed the Senate by a unanimous 32-0 vote at the end of June.

The Social Work Licensure Compact (“the Compact”) is an interstate occupational licensure compact for social workers. An interstate occupational licensure compact is a contract among two or more states which creates and agreement on a particular policy issue, adopting a certain standard, allowing them to cooperate on regional or national matters. States joining a compact agree to recognize a license issued by another compact member state, thereby allowing a professional to practice in the “remote state” without having to go through each individual state’s licensure process.

The Compact is similar in form and function to the other compacts Ohio has already enacted into law, in that a social worker must hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state to be eligible to apply for a multistate license. These social workers must also pass a background check and meet other category-specific eligibility requirements related to education and

examinations. When eligibility is verified and all fees are paid, the social worker receives their multistate license and may begin working in any member state.<sup>1</sup>

From a regulatory standpoint, there are no changes to each compact member state's authority to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure<sup>2</sup>. A social worker with a multi-state license providing services in a remote state must abide by the scope of practice, laws, and rules of the remote state where the client is located at the time care is rendered. Additionally, there are no changes to a state's ability to offer a single state license.<sup>3</sup>

The Compact is still in its formative stage, with the Department of Defense and the Council of State Governments forming a technical assistance group consisting of representatives from more than a dozen state boards, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 2021. The group met regularly over the course of several months to determine the mobility needs of the profession, analyze current licensure requirements in the states, and to develop policy recommendations for the initial draft of the compact. Using recommendations from the group and the public, a smaller Document Team of legislative drafting experts, licensure board attorneys and social work practice specialists created a final draft in early 2023.

One would think that with the Compact language having been approved and finalized, licensees could begin applying for a multistate license upon state enactment. That is not yet the case, as this is a brand new compact and it is not yet active, the governing commission will form once seven states have enacted

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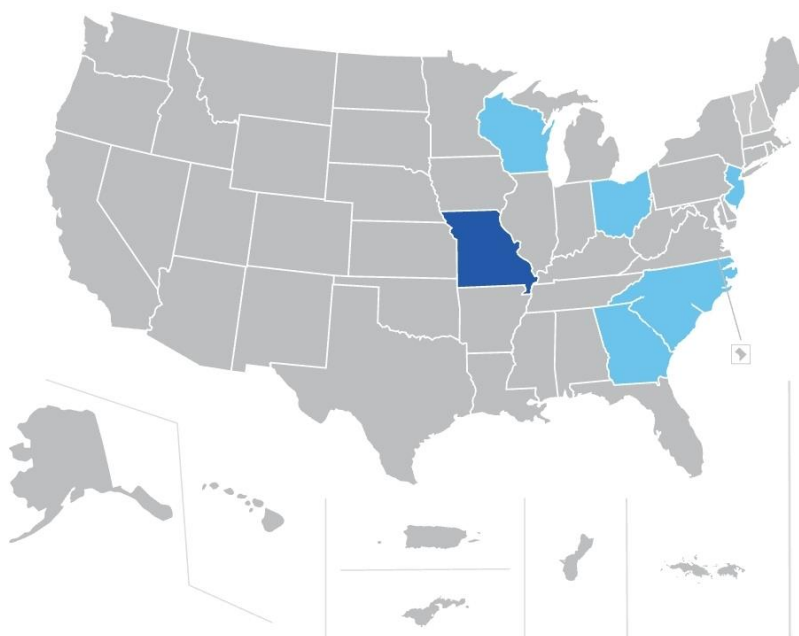
<sup>1</sup> [Lines 212-329 of Senate Bill 90 "As Introduced"](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Lines 351-356 of Senate Bill 90 "As Introduced"](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Lines 357-359 of Senate Bill 90 "As Introduced"](#)

legislation<sup>4</sup>. Those first seven states are responsible for initial adoption of the rules and bylaws of the Compact's operation going forward.

Six other states have introduced language to join the Compact (Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Missouri) and Missouri has already enacted their legislation.<sup>5</sup> Passing this bill expeditiously would allow us to be one of the first seven, not only giving us that early seat at the table, but would also signal that the Buckeye State will continue to be a national leader in increasing access to care for patients and maximizing mobility for licensed medical professionals.



The lack of occupational licensure reciprocity is a real barrier for licensed medical professionals seeking to move across state lines, with University of Minnesota researchers finding that the interstate migration rate for individuals in occupations with state-specific licensing exam requirements is 36% lower relative to those in non-licensed occupations.<sup>6</sup> More than a third of individuals are potentially passing up better career opportunities, all due to the hassle presented by relicensing in a new state. This was one reason more than 600 licensed social workers spoke in support of Senate Bill 90 during the National Association of Social Workers recent advocacy day (some of whom you will likely hear from at a future hearing) and is especially important to highlight since our neighboring state Kentucky is also working on enacting the Compact.

<sup>4</sup> [Lines 1051-1053 of Senate Bill 90 "As Introduced"](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://swcompact.org/compact-map/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/sr/sr561.pdf>

Just as a Cincinnati social worker doesn't forget how to drive when they cross into Kentucky, their social work skillset follows them across the border – their social work license should too.

Maximizing mobility and ensuring license portability is even more important for our military families, who relocate every 2-3 years (10x more often than civilians) and often wait 10+ months for a license transfer.<sup>7 8</sup> This Compact eases that burden and supports military families by allowing the service member or their spouse to continue to work with their current compact privilege if they are assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state. Dr. Christine Hammer, a military spouse and licensed medical professional, stated: “If there were already a compact, my husband and I wouldn't think twice about how we rank our duty stations and where we beg the detailer to assign us. It would be life changing for us in many ways.”<sup>9</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 90. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://counselingcompact.org/tool-kit/> (see video time marker 2:05)

<sup>8</sup> <https://counselingcompact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CC-Summit-Slides-2021.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://swcompact.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2023/02/Social-Work-Licensure-Compact-Benefits-for-Military-Families.pdf>