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Sponsor Testimony

Senate Bill 56

Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee

October 10th, 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 56, which upon enactment would join Ohio to the “Interstate Massage Compact.” Senate Bill 56 passed the Senate by unanimous 33-0 vote in September.

The Interstate Massage Compact (“IMpact”) is an interstate occupational licensure compact for massage therapists. As this committee knows, an interstate compact is a contract among two or more states which creates an agreement on a particular policy issue, allowing them to cooperate on regional or national matters.¹ States joining the “IMpact” 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 “IMpact” is similar in form and function to other compacts the legislature has considered, in that a massage therapist must hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state to be eligible to apply for compact privileges and obtain a multistate license. These practitioners must also pass a background check and meet other eligibility requirements related to education and examinations. 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 – a licensee practicing under compact privilege must abide by the laws, regulations and rules for the state in which they are located.² To summarize “IMpact allows massage therapists who maintain an active, unencumbered license in the compact member state where they reside to apply for a multistate license. After verifying eligibility, the

¹ <https://compacts.csg.org/compact-updates/massage-therapy/>

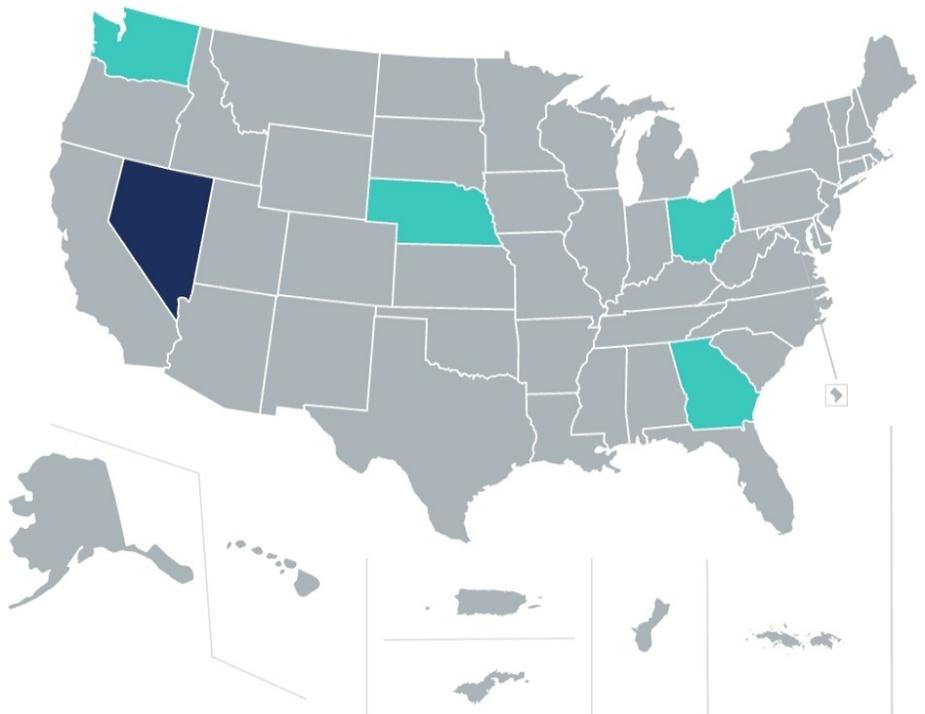
² [Lines 205-259 of SB56 As Introduced](#)

massage therapist is granted a multistate license which authorizes practice in all other compact member states. The massage therapist must maintain their “home state” license in good standing.”³

The “IMpact” is still in its formative stage, with a stakeholder group forming in 2021 and gathering feedback throughout 2022. This group consisted of industry representatives from multiple states, including the Ohio Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association, the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB), the Department of Defense (DOD) and others to develop model language. Model language was released in late 2022 and, similar to other compacts, stipulates that the IMpact will take effect when seven states enact enabling legislation.⁴ Ohio’s massage therapy industry worked proactively during the development process of this compact, and it would be wonderful if we could be one of the first seven to enact the bill in order to keep that seat at the table.

Four other states have introduced legislation to join the “IMpact” (Washington, Nebraska, Georgia and Nevada), with Nevada’s SB161 being signed by Governor Lombardo in June.^{5,6}

The lack of occupational licensure reciprocity is a real barrier for individuals seeking to move across state lines. Researchers at the University of Minnesota found 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.⁷



³ <https://massagecompact.org/faq/>

⁴ [Lines 928-929 of SB56 As Introduced](#)

⁵ <https://massagecompact.org/compact-map/>

⁶ <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/82nd2023/Reports/history.cfm?ID=626>

⁷ <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/sr/sr561.pdf>

The IMpact also makes life easier for military families, by allowing the service member or their spouse to continue to work with their current compact privilege if the military family is assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state.

Overall, the IMpact will support military families, improve access to and continuity of care for Ohio residents, and increase license portability for the over 11,000 massage therapy professionals based in the Buckeye State⁸, while maintaining the current high level of care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

⁸ <https://med.ohio.gov/Publications/Annual-Report>