

Proponent Testimony (written and in person)

Ohio Senate Health Committee Hearing RE: SB 21 1 — Dietitian Licensure Compact

Date: 4.24.2024

From: Cynthia Blocksom, MEd, RDN, LD, MCHES, FAND

To: Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, my name is Cynthia Blocksom. I am testifying before you today as a Proponent of SB 21 1 - Dietitian Licensure Compact bill.

As a constituent from Senator Ingram's district and licensed Dietitian with a 30-year career in Public Health and currently an instructor of nutrition courses at the University of Cincinnati, I urge you to support SB 21 1.

The Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is firmly in support of Ohio participating in the proposed Dietitian Licensure Compact as described in SB 21 1. Senator Roegner and four of our Ohio members, including myself, contributed to the technical advisory group that worked with the Department of Defense, Counsel of State Governments National Center for Interstate Licensure Compacts, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to create the model language that was included in SB 21 1. This uniform language is also being used in Dietitian Licensure Compact bills in other eligible states.

As proposed, the Dietitian Compact will support the mobility of licensed dietitians through the development of the new interstate compact. This additional licensing pathway will facilitate multistate practice among member states, reduce barriers to license portability, expand employment opportunities into new markets, and expand consumer access to highly qualified practitioners while facilitating mobility for licensees and military families.

This additional licensing pathway offered by the Dietitian Licensure Compact is especially of interest to the Dietetic students who will be seeking employment opportunities upon graduation. I have heard from many students that the reduction of the burden of obtaining and maintaining multiple licenses to be able to practice in several states no matter if they remain in Ohio after graduation or move elsewhere and want to practice dietetics in Ohio is of major concern.

It is important to recognize the qualifications obtained by dietitians to be able to provide and maintain a high level of patient care, especially in providing medical nutrition therapy. The Students I teach who graduate this spring from the University of Cincinnati will have completed a minimum of a master's degree in a dietetics program that is programmatically accredited by the Accreditation Council of Education Nutrition and

Dietetics (ACEND). Furthermore, it is required that dietitians complete a programmatically accredited supervised practice of at least 1000 hours, pass a national exam offered by the Commission for Dietetic Registration (CDR), and stay up-to-date by completing required continuing education. Additionally, dietitians must comply with the requirements to practice in the state where their clients reside. Many dietitians also seek additional specialty credentials in the areas of gerontological nutrition (CSC), sports dietetics (CSSD), pediatric nutrition (CSP), renal nutrition (CSR), and oncology nutrition (CSO) as well as certificates of Training in Retail Food Industry, Policy and Advocacy, Nutrition Focused Physical Exams, Nutrigenomics, Chronic Kidney Disease and Integrative and Functional Nutrition, RDNs are truly the nutrition experts.

Joining the Dietitian Licensure Compact would also benefit our state by promoting workforce development and strengthening labor markets, expanding consumer access to highly qualified practitioners, enhancement of public safety through a shared interstate data system of licensure and disciplinary information, allowing for rapid verification of licensure status, and cooperation among states as well as preserving state sovereignty.

Please support the enactment of SB 21 1 Dietitian Licensure Compact in Ohio.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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