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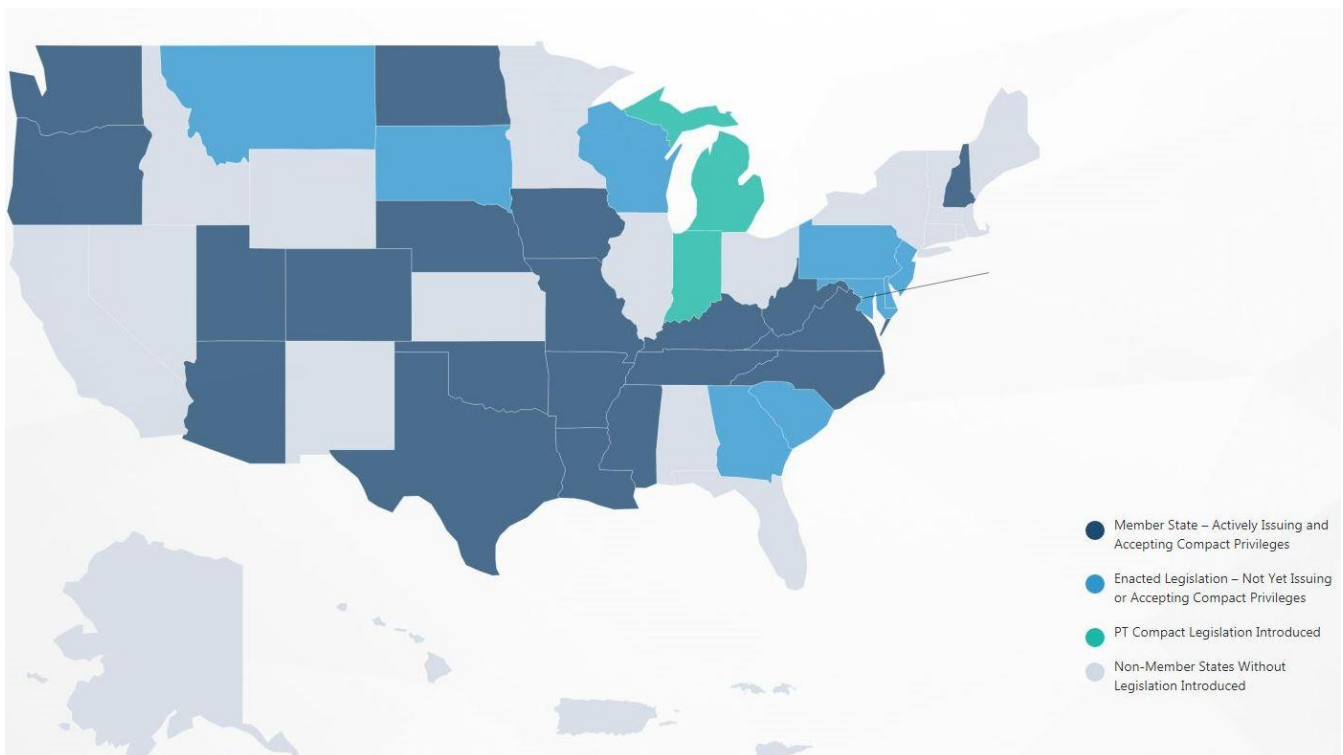


Louis W. Blessing, III
State Senator
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Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 5
Ohio Senate Health Committee
January 27, 2021

Chair Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on S.B. 5, which upon enactment would join Ohio to the “Physical Therapy Licensure Compact.” This agreement between member states aims to facilitate interstate practice of physical therapy and improve public access to physical therapy services. This legislation is a reintroduction of SB272, which passed the Senate unanimously last General Assembly as well as the House Health Committee, with no opposition in either Chamber.

There are currently twenty “member” states in the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, including our neighbors to the south, Kentucky & West Virginia. An



additional nine more, including our neighbor to the east, Pennsylvania, have enacted legislation to join the compact but are still working to participate. Michigan and Indiana are also currently considering a bill to join the compact. In total, thirty-one states, including all of Ohio's five bordering states, have either passed legislation to become part of this national compact, or are currently considering such legislation.¹

A lack of licensure reciprocity is not only discouraging but is in fact an occupational barrier for individuals who are 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.² In other words, standardizing licensure requirements across states improves occupational and economic mobility. It is important to note that the Compact specifically “preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.”

We would like to commend the Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers' Board for working with us to develop this bill as an effort to end unnecessary licensure roadblocks in the physical therapy profession. The board is very interested in enabling physical therapists and physical therapy assistants to use their licenses throughout the country, streamlining administrative requirements and enhancing access to care for compact member states.

Under the bill, residents of PT Compact states would be able to purchase a compact privilege in a member state and begin to practice physical therapy in another compact state almost immediately. The cost of the compact privilege is \$45 in addition to the fee charged by the member state. Additionally, individuals seeking compact privileges to practice in another state may be required to take a jurisprudence exam on the laws governing the profession in that specific member state.

This legislation is supported by the Ohio Physical Therapy Association and physical therapists across Ohio. It expands economic opportunity for Ohio's physical

¹ <http://ptcompact.org/ptc-states>

² <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/sr/sr561.pdf>

therapists and physical therapist assistants, and attracts to Ohio professionals trained in this important industry from other states. However the number one goal as stated in the compact is to “increase public access to physical therapy services by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses.”

Finally, it is important to note that the language in this bill is drafted to correspond exactly with legislation adopted in the other states and that changes to the language could result in the Ohio being unable to join the compact. Therefore if this bill is to pass, it is critical that it do so as it is currently written.

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