

Dear Workforce Development Committee,

As a counselor who works on the border between two states, and as a lifetime resident of this state, I am writing to convey the utmost support for the Council of State Government's Interstate Counseling Compact.

Not only will the Interstate Counseling Compact increase the safety, accessibility, and quality of services for existing and potential clients reducing barriers to mental health services across the nation, it would increase the mobility of employment opportunities within the counseling profession.

Counselors within this state would more easily be able to establish and maintain essential ongoing and preventative care/service to clients who are facing disproportionately high levels of mental health concerns and stress due to the need for relocation or displacement. It would also allow continued care for clients in the case that the counselor must relocate due to any of the circumstances listed below, demonstrating a mutually beneficial policy, for both clients and providers. Common reasons for this include but are not limited to:

- Covid-19
- Climate change
- Attending college out-of-state
- Financial crisis or chronic poverty
- Military/veteran status (including families of military/veteran members)
- Extenuating personal/family circumstances, and various social and/or economic burdens of many kinds

Importantly, the Counseling Compact preserves each member state's authority to regulate the profession. Counselors utilizing the Compact must abide by the laws and rules of the state in which they are practicing, including adhering to that state's scope of practice.

Cumulatively and in general, this aids in increasing the opportunities, freedoms, and quality of life for both counselors, clients, and those seeking care/services, and reducing barriers that can be found in rural communities. As a National-scale act of advocacy, the Compact goes a long way in bolstering the reputability, quality, and strength of the counseling profession as a whole.

Sincerely,

Ashley Limesand, LPC-Supervised(MN), LAPC(ND), NCC