



Testimony on HB 1035
North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
21 February 2025
Senate Workforce Development Committee

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Alison Traynor, and I am president of the board of the North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-ND). We request a Do Pass vote for HB 1035, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

NASW-ND has welcomed the release of the compact. At this time, 22 states have passed the compact, including South Dakota and Minnesota.

The social work licensure compact would provide social workers with licensure mobility in compact states. Under the current system, social workers are required to obtain separate licenses in each state where they wish to practice. This is costly, labor-intensive, and time-consuming. The licensure compact could combat this issue by creating a more efficient processing system while protecting public safety.

Notably, the Department of Defense invested in the social work compact to support military families. Active duty families are often reassigned within the duration of the service member's contract, leading to excessive strain regarding job security for the licensed professional. This compact allows the active duty service member or their spouse to designate a Home State for primary licensure and to keep that designation as long as the service member is on active duty, ensuring career development and practice regardless of duty station.

The current process for obtaining licensure across multiple states is cumbersome and expensive, which leads to unnecessary gaps in clinical care. Current state licensure laws prohibit social workers from continuing care with clients who are mobile for work or who move out of state during the duration of treatment, forcing providers to terminate care with clients, regardless of their needs.

The Compact can eliminate barriers to practice and increase access to care, especially in underserved, geographically isolated, or specialty-care-lacking areas. It does this by making it easier to become licensed across state lines.

Much like the existing licensure compacts, the social work licensure compact will benefit clients and the social work profession by:

- Increasing access to care for clients
- Ensuring continuity of care when clients or social workers relocate or travel
- Modernizing data sharing between states that utilize public protections for vulnerable clients
- Simplifying current interstate licensure processes
- Enhancing mobility for social workers who meet uniform requirements
- Allowing military personnel and spouses to maintain licensure when relocating

The social work licensure compact is a long-term solution to the issue of licensure portability, practice across state lines, and access shortages in behavioral health.

NASW-ND urges you to vote Do Pass on HB 1035.

Respectfully,
Alison Traynor, MSW, MPH, LCSW
President, North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers