

Testimony of SB 2187
The Workforce Development Committee
of the North Dakota Senate
Senator Michael A. Wobbema, Chairman
February 16, 2023

Senator Wobbema and members of the Workforce Development Committee, my name is Andrew Rohrich, and I am the Government Affairs Chair for the North Dakota Counseling Association and the North Dakota Mental Health Counseling Association. I am providing written testimony in support of Senate Bill 2187.

According to the counsel of state governments, North Dakota has joined as many occupational compacts as any other state. North Dakota is no stranger to the benefits that come along with joining these compacts. One of the main advantages of a compact is the creation of infrastructure for states to utilize when determining who can gain a privilege to practice. Since the counseling compact is so new, joining now gives North Dakota a voice in the creation of the infrastructure within the compact committee. Being a member of the counseling compact would give North Dakota a say in committee decisions such as fees and national exams that will be used. There are currently 17 states that have joined and another 20 states that have pending legislation to join the counseling compact. If we wait until our next legislative session, we could be one of only a handful of states that have not yet joined the counseling compact. If North Dakota waits for a later legislative session, all the important infrastructure decisions will have been made and we will have not had a say in any of it.

Another benefit to the counseling compact is a decrease in workload for our licensure boards. Currently, if someone wants to practice counseling in North Dakota, they must apply for

a full license in the state. There is a compact data system where the states share information. States have reported that there are less license applications and renewals for out of state counselors, due to counselors applying for privilege to practice instead of full licensure. It takes about 5 minutes on average to review an application for a privilege to practice. The most important fact of this legislation is that it is going to increase access to mental health services in our rural state.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill and will be available to answer questions you might have in the future, and I strongly support this legislation.

Andrew Rohrich
Government Affairs Chair
NDCA/NDMHCA