2025 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES
HB 1035

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee

Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1035 1/8/2025

Relating to the adoption of the social work licensure compact.

2:11 Chairman Ruby called the meeting to order.

Members present: Chairman Ruby Vice Chairman Frelich, Representatives Anderson, Beltz, Bolinske, Dobervich, Fegley, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr

Members absent: Rep. Davis

Discussion Topics:

- Bring social work licensure compact to North Dakota.
- 2:12 Senator Wobbema Introduced the bill to the committee.
- 2:15 Melissa Hauer General counsel of North Dakota Hospital Association, testified in favor of and provided testimony in favor of. #28105.
- 2:16 Colonel Jay Sheldon of the North Dakota Military Commission, testified in favor of and provided testimony in favor of. #28168.
- 2:19 Calvin Benson on behalf of Nexus PATH, testified in favor of and provided testimony in favor of. #28234
- 2:20 Greg Kasowski with Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota, testified in favor of and provided testimony in favor of. #28185.
- 2:22 Elizabeth Loos with North Dakota Chapter National Association of Social Workers, testified in favor of and provided testimony in favor of. #28163.

Additional written testimony:

Michelle Richart, Department of Defense provided written testimony in favor of. #28084. Cale Dunwoody, FMWF Chamber provided written testimony in favor of. #28100. Kaitlyn Bison, Council of State Governments, provided written neutral testimony. #28190. Brekka Kramer, President/CEO, Minot Area Chamber EDC, submitted written testimony in favor #45389.

2:25 Chairman Ruby adjourned the meeting.

House Human Services Committee HB 1035 01/08/25 Page 2

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

January 8, 2025

The Honorable Representative Matthew Ruby Chair, House Human Services Committee

Remarks of
Michelle Richart
Midwest Regional Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office

Support of: HB 1035 – Social Work Licensure Compact

Testimony

The Department of Defense is grateful for the opportunity to support policy changes proposed in North Dakota HB 1035, regarding the Social Work Licensure Compact, a measure to reduce barriers to social work licensing and employment in North Dakota.

My name is Michelle Richart and I am the Midwest Regional Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We represent the Department and work with state leaders across the country who are concerned for troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. These are identified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the National Guard Bureau as areas where states can play a crucial role.

The Department of Defense has advocated for improved licensure and career portability for military Service members and their spouses for several years. Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific professional licensing requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment, with thirty-six percent requiring a state license to practice in their professions and an annual cross-state relocation rate more than ten times higher than their civilian counterparts. Accordingly, military spouses experience unemployment and underemployment at significantly higher rates than their civilian peers.

State policies enacting interstate licensure compacts, such as the Social Work Licensure Compact, relieve one of the many stressors of frequent military moves by enabling military spouses to transfer their licenses more quickly across state lines and obtain employment as soon as they relocate to a new state. These policies facilitate greater career sustainability for military spouses, improving their families' financial security and overall resilience.

Interstate licensure compacts benefit not only military spouses, but also apply to all eligible professionals to include active-duty Service members, members of the reserve components, veterans, and civilians. By continuing to enact these beneficial policies, North Dakota can expand the opportunity to increase its workforce available to serve the local community while

continuing in its great tradition of providing an extraordinary degree of support to our military families as they move into and out of the state.

In closing, the Department of Defense is very appreciative of North Dakota's ongoing commitment and efforts to support members of the military and their families who sacrifice much in service to our country. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide comments in support of this policy proposal.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Very Respectfully,

MICHELLE RICHART

Midwest Regional Liaison Defense-State Liaison Office

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Letter of Support - HB 1035

January 8th, 2024

Chairman M. Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1035.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. We believe the passage of this legislation will further improve the state's workforce landscape. By adopting this licensure compact for social workers, North Dakota will streamline the licensing process and enhance its ability to attract skilled professionals while promoting cooperation with neighboring compact member states, such as Minnesota and South Dakota.

Additionally, this bill provides greater flexibility for military spouses who are often highly qualified but face barriers when relocating due to military orders. By reducing burdensome and duplicative licensing requirements, we empower these individuals to continue their professional careers, contributing to our local economy and enriching our communities.

House Bill 1035 is a vital step in improving the workforce environment in North Dakota, enhancing our ability to attract talent from across the nation. We encourage this committee and the Legislative Assembly to support this bill, along with other initiatives, to help us address our state's critical workforce challenges.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce



2025 HB 1035

House Human Services Committee Representative Matthew Ruby, Chairman January 8, 2025

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP, of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I am here to testify in support of House Bill 1035. I ask that you give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

North Dakota is in need of additional mental health service providers, especially in rural areas where access can be difficult. Even in more urban areas, hospitals struggle to find enough social workers to meet the demand. Hospitals support the bill because it would streamline the interstate practice of social worker by improving public access to competent social work services. And the compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.

Under the Social Work Licensure Compact, social workers can get a multistate license, which clears them to care for clients in a participating state, even if they don't live there. Social workers must abide by the laws of the state where the client resides. The compact alleviates barriers to practice and increases access to care, especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care, by increasing the speed and efficiency of becoming licensed across state lines. Currently, social workers must seek a separate license in each state in which they wish to practice, which can be labor, time and financially intensive. A compact creates a more efficient processing system, while also protecting public safety. Other overall benefits of joining the compact include:

- Facilitating interstate telehealth mental health services
- Encouraging cooperation among compact member states/territories in regulating the practice of social work

Preserving and strengthening state licensure systems

Other professions have similar interstate licensing compacts that have worked well to make licensing across state lines faster and more efficient, such as the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC), the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact (APRN Compact), the Physical Therapy Compact (PT Compact), and the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). From hospitals' perspective, additional benefits of adopting this particular compact are that it will:

- Facilitate telehealth
- Support mental health workforce needs across North Dakota
- Streamlines licensing administration for both licensing boards and licensed social workers
- Promote continuity of care when social workers or clients relocate
- Allow social workers to expand services into new markets, especially rural areas

In summary, we support passage of this bill and hope that you will give it a Do Pass recommendation.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP North Dakota Hospital Association



Testimony on HB 1035 National Association of Social Workers – North Dakota Chapter ND House Human Services Committee January 7, 2025

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Loos and I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-ND) to request a do-pass vote on HB 1035, the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.

NASW has welcomed the release of the compact. At the time of this writing, 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. Currently, social workers must seek a separate license in each state in which they wish to practice, which can be labor- and time-intensive—especially for military social workers. A compact creates a more efficient processing system, while also protecting public safety.

Notably, the Department of Defense invested in the social work compact in an effort to support military families. Military families are known to be highly mobile due to frequent duty station re-assignments. This level of mobility creates barriers to employment and career development for military spouses and licensed professionals. The Compact allows active-duty military personnel or their spouse to designate a Home State for primary licensure and keep that designation as long as the service member is on active duty, ensuring that the service member or their spouse can continue to work with their current compact license regardless of duty station re-assignments during their term of service.

The existing process for obtaining licensure across multiple states is cumbersome, costly, time-consuming, and can result in 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 course of treatment, forcing providers to terminate care with these clients regardless of their need.

The Compact has the ability to eliminate barriers to practice and can increase access to care, especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care. It does this by increasing the efficiency of becoming licensed across state lines.

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

- Ensuring continuity of care when clients or social workers relocate or travel
- Increasing access to care for clients

- Modernizing data sharing between states which 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,

Elizabeth Loos, Lobbyist NASW North Dakota

TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAY SHELDON NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD BEFORE THE HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE 08 JANUARY 2025 HOUSE BILL 1035

Chair Ruby, Vice Chair Frelich, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jay Sheldon, and I am here representing the North Dakota Military Commission to express support for HB 1035, which would have North Dakota join an interstate licensing compact for social workers.

North Dakota recognizes the unique challenges faced by these families, particularly the frequent relocations that come with military service. For military spouses who are licensed social workers, moving to a new state can involve navigating varied licensure requirements, which can delay their ability to provide services and support to our communities.

By joining the social work licensing compact, North Dakota would facilitate a smoother transition for these professionals, allowing licensed social workers from the other 22 compact member states (6 pending) to practice in our state with reduced administrative burdens. This is crucial as we continue to address the increasing demand for social work services in our communities, especially considering growing awareness around mental health, child welfare, and family support.

Supporting this compact not only helps military families but also enhances the overall capacity of our social service systems. It enables our communities to tap into a broader pool of qualified social workers who can provide critical services to those in need, including the military connected population.

Adopting this compact demonstrates North Dakota's commitment to being a military-friendly state and reinforces our dedication to ensuring that all residents have access to the support they need. By reducing barriers for social workers, we can foster a more effective and responsive system that addresses the diverse needs of our entire population.

On behalf of the North Dakota Military Commission, I ask you to support HB 1035.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.



House Human Services Committee Testimony In Support of House Bill #1035 1-8-24

Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Greg Kasowski, Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I am here in support of House Bill 1035.

Each year across North Dakota, Children's Advocacy Centers provide direct services to more than 3,000 victims of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, and other forms of child maltreatment. At each of our 11 locations, we function as a **centralized hub for child abuse cases** where our partners in law enforcement, human services, prosecution, medical, mental health, and victim advocacy all work collaboratively to help victims of child abuse.

The social work licensure compact offers many benefits to our state. A primary benefit for our Children's Advocacy Centers will be our ability to **increase access to and continuity of mental health care for our clients**, ultimately improving the mental well-being of children.

Many of the children we serve come from split homes; and oftentimes parents reside in different states. When the school year concludes for kids in the month of May, it's not uncommon for them to live with a caregiver temporarily in another state. Thus, while in the middle of working through their horrific trauma, these children move to a different location and may not be able to find services for a variety of reasons (e.g., long wait lists). Furthermore, the child is deprived of the established rapport and trust they have with their North Dakota clinician. This leads to increased stress, difficulty sleeping or eating, and behavioral problems.

Summer break is not the only time this continuity of service is interrupted. Since more than 90% of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts, families are often compelled to relocate for safety or to just get away from the place where the abuse happened.

The social work licensure compact would allow our licensed social workers to provide continuity of care through tele mental health services while the child is in another state that is part of the compact.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to try and answer any of your questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Kasowski Executive Director





CSG Testimony on HB 1035 – Social Work Licensure Compact January 8th, 2025
Kaitlyn Bison, The Council of State Governments. kbison@csg.org

My name is Kaitlyn Bison with The Council of State Governments. My written testimony is meant to provide background educational information on the compact.

The Council of State Governments is a nonpartisan membership association for elected and appointed state government officials from all three branches. CSG, through its National Center for Interstate Compacts, has facilitated the development process for all seventeen of the active occupational licensing compacts, including the seven that North Dakota is a member of (APRN, counseling, EMS, nursing, psychology, physical therapy, and medicine).

There are approximately 500,000 licensed social workers in the United States. Despite the high demand for social work services, licensees are currently limited to providing services within state borders. The Social Work Licensure Compact seeks to provide licensees with opportunities for multistate practice, support relocating practitioners, and foster workforce development by reducing unnecessary licensure burdens.

The compact was created through a cooperative agreement between the Department of Defense and The Council of State Governments. For 18 months, CSG developed the compact language with stakeholders within the profession from the Association of Social Work Boards, National Association of Social Workers, Clinical Social Work Association, social work regulatory boards, the social work education community, and others.

The Compact will enable social workers to obtain a multistate license issued by their home state to practice in other states that join the compact, rather than get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. Like the compact for a driver's license, each compact member state agrees to mutually recognize the practitioner licenses issued by every other member state.

The Social Work Licensure Compact is similar in form and function to the seven other occupational licensing compacts that North Dakota is already a member of. A social worker must hold an active, unencumbered license in their home state to be eligible for a multistate license. Licensees must also pass a background check and meet other eligibility requirements related to education and examinations.



From a regulatory perspective, the Compact preserves the authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. A licensee practicing under a multistate license must abide by the laws, regulations and rules that govern the practice of social work in the state in which they are located. The North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners has jurisdiction over anyone practicing in North Dakota under a multistate license.

The Social Work Licensure Compact also benefits military families. If a military family gets assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state, the service member or their spouse can continue to work with their current multistate license.

Like all of the other occupational licensing compacts, the Social Work Licensure Compact will be governed by a commission made up of the member states. Currently, it is made up of 22 member states. If enacted in North Dakota, a representative from the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners would serve as a delegate on the compact commission.

Overall, the Social Work Licensure Compact will increase license portability for social work professionals in North Dakota, support military families, and improve access to social work services for North Dakota residents, while maintaining the current system of state licensure. Additionally, by ensuring the sharing of investigative and disciplinary information among participating states, the Social Work Licensure Compact will allow participating state regulatory entities to better protect the public. I understand that increasing access to mental health providers is a key issue facing states, and we believe the compact provides one solution that helps alleviate that problem.

Senate Human Services Committee Chairman Representative Matthew Ruby January 8, 2025



Testimony of: Kate Coughlin Executive Director | Nexus-PATH Family Healing kcoughlin@nexuspath.org | Direct: (218) 979-0180

Responding to the Children's Behavioral Health Crisis: Support for House Bill 1035 and the adoption of the social work licensure compact

Chair Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Kate Coughlin, Executive Director Nexus-PATH Family Healing.

Our nation's leading pediatric health experts have declared the children's behavioral health crisis so dire that it warrants a national emergency. In 2021, over 35% of ND high school students – grades 9-12 – reported feeling persistent sadness or hopelessness and nearly 1 in 5 reported seriously considering dying by suicide within the past 12-months (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021), equating to approximately 6.818 youth across the state. The challenges of recent years have only increased the need for timely access to high-quality mental health services.

Failure to ensure that mental health services are available when and where people need them has dire consequences for individuals, families and communities throughout North Dakota. In the current system, only four counties have the mental health resources their population requires. Only if you live in one of these more densely populated counties can adequate services be found.

As the Executive Director of a children's mental health care provider, I can attest to the acute need to improve access to care by addressing workforce shortages while maintaining our high standards for professional practice. The adoption of the Social Work Licensure Compact provides an opportunity to do so and to improve the lives of countless children and families.

First and foremost, the Social Work Licensure Compact would enhance access to care for children, particularly in underserved and rural communities. By enabling licensed social workers to practice across member states without obtaining additional licensure, the compact allows mental health providers to quickly fill workforce gaps. This flexibility is especially vital in addressing urgent needs, such as those that arise in crisis situations and in areas with persistent shortages of qualified mental health professionals. Furthermore, the compact facilitates the provision of telehealth services, ensuring that children in remote areas can receive the support they need without delay.

The compact also establishes consistent standards for licensure, providing assurance that all participating social workers meet rigorous qualifications, regardless of their state of origin. This standardization not only safeguards the quality of care but also reduces administrative burdens for providers navigating a patchwork of state-specific licensure requirements. By streamlining these processes, the compact will

allow my organization and its providers to focus their resources on delivering care rather than navigating complex bureaucratic hurdles.

The Passage of the Social Work Licensure Compact will enable providers to recruit from a broader pool of qualified social workers, reducing delays in onboarding and ensuring that critical positions can be filled more efficiently. This is especially valuable in the context of children's mental health care, where perpetual workforce shortages are experienced sharply.

Additionally, the compact supports continuity of care for families who relocate across state lines, such as military families or those moving to North Dakota for our boundless economic opportunities. Children can maintain relationships with their trusted social workers, ensuring stability and uninterrupted support during times of transition while providing a more simple exchange as patients change providers.

The compact can also help address the broader workforce shortage in mental health care. By easing the approval process for social workers to move between states, it reduces barriers to entry and expands the availability of skilled professionals to serve the people of North Dakota. This increased mobility benefits mental health providers and creates options for local communities. In addition, the administrative cost savings achieved through streamlined licensing processes may allow us to allocate resources more effectively, improving the supply and delivery of care.

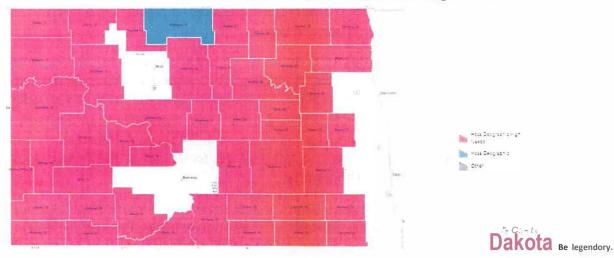
Nexus-PATH supports the adoption of the social work licensure compact as proposed in HB 1035 and supports the passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this critical issue affecting the state of North Dakota.

We ask for a "DO PASS" recommendation for HB 1035.

NORTH DAKOTA MENTAL HEALTH HPSA - 2023

Mental Health - Health Professional Shortage Areas





1020 20th Avenue SW PO Box 940 Minot, North Dakota 58702-0940 Telephone: 701.852.6000 Fax: 701.838.2488 www.minotchamberedc.com minot@minotchamberedc.com

House Human Services Committee Chairman – Representative Matthew Ruby January 8, 2024

Letter of Support HB 1035

Testimony of:
Brekka Kramer
President | CEO Minot Area Chamber EDC
ND Miliary Commission Executive Committee Member
brekka@minotchamberedc.com
(701) 720-5798

Chairman Ruby, Vice Chair Frelich, and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

I am Brekka Kramer, President | CEO of the Minot Area Chamber EDC (MACEDC). On behalf of our organization and member investors, I offer testimony in support of House Bill 1035.

The MACEDC's mission is to advocate for and invest in business activity by being a collaborative partner in the community, focused on improving quality of life for all. MACEDC has five key strategic pillars, two of them being workforce development and military support. We believe that House Bill 1035 as proposed would have a positive impact on the workforce environment of our great state by supporting licensed social workers, specifically military spouses, in their endeavor to continue work during their relocation.

We see higher demand for social workers in our communities to assist with a number of challenges, including child welfare, poverty, mental health, and family assistance. This social work licensing compact would ease the burden of relocation for these individuals moving from the other 22 compact states for a smooth transition into social work in North Dakota.

Making the licensing transition easier not only benefits the social workers but everyone in North Dakota, allowing them to provide the necessary assistance and infrastructure needed in our social services system.

I am a proud member of the North Dakota Military Commission, which has a vision to make North Dakota the most military friendly state in the nation. As a long-term advocate for improved licensure and career portability for military service members and their spouses, I ask for your support of House Bill 1035 and am available for any questions you may have.



2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee

Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1035 1/15/2025

Relating to the adoption of the social work licensure compact.

2:32 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman M. Ruby, Vice Chairman Frelich, Representatives K. Anderson, Beltz, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr

Discussion Topics:

• Committee work

2:35 p.m. Representative Beltz moved a Do Pass.

2:35 p.m. Vice Chairman Frelich seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Matthew Ruby	Υ
Representative Kathy Frelich	Υ
Representative Karen Anderson	Υ
Representative Mike Beltz	Υ
Representative Macy Bolinske	Υ
Representative Jayme Davis	Υ
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Υ
Representative Cleyton Fegley	Υ
Representative Jared Hendrix	Υ
Representative Dawson Holle	Υ
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Υ
Representative Nico Rios	Υ
Representative Karen Rohr	Υ

2:36 p.m. Motion passed 13-0-0.

Representative Holle will carry the bill.

2:36 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the meeting.

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE HB 1035 (25.0197.01000)

Module ID: h_stcomrep_05_005

Carrier: Holle

Human Services Committee (Rep. M. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1035 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
HB 1035

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee

Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1035 2/21/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact chapter 43-41.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to adoption of the social work licensure compact.

10:30 a.m. Chairman Wobbema called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

Discussion Topics:

Compact participation by other states

10:30 a.m. Jay Sheldon, ND Military Commission, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38161.

10:33 a.m. Greg Kasowski, Executive Director Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38245.

10:35 a.m. Calvin Benson, Nexus-PATH Family Healing, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38315.

10:36 a.m. Rachel Sester testified in favor.

10:40 a.m. Senator Axtman moved Do Pass.

10:40 a.m. Senator Larson seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Mike Wobbema	Υ
Senator Michelle Axtman	Υ
Senator Josh Boschee	Υ
Senator Diane Larson	Υ
Senator Michelle Powers	Υ

Motion Passed 5-0-0

Senator Wobbema will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Alicia Plemmons, PhD, Assistant Professor and Co-Director of the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University, submitted testimony in neutral #38064.

Senate Workforce Development Committee HB 1035 02/21/2025 Page 2

Alison Traynor, President of North Dakota Chapter of National Assoc. of Social Worker, submitted testimony in favor #38174.

Melissa A. Hauer, General Counsel/VP of ND Hospital Association, submitted testimony #38230.

Cale Dunwoody, FMWF Chamber of Commerce, submitted testimony in favor #38234.

Michelle Richart, Defense-State Liaison Office United States Department of Defense, submitted testimony in favor #38278.

10:41 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE HB 1035 (25.0197.01000)

Module ID: s_stcomrep_32_008

Carrier: Wobbema

Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends DO PASS (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1035 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.



February 18th, 2025 Senate Workforce Development Committee

Dear Chair Wobbema, Vice Chair Axtman and all distinguished members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on HB 1035, which adopts the social work licensure compact. My name is Alicia Plemmons, PhD, and I am an assistant professor and co-director of the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University. This comment is not submitted on behalf of any party or interest group.

My research studies patient outcomes in terms of safety, quality, cost, and access under different practice agreements. Compacts are a unique solution to workforce mobility problems, and in fact my team has found evidence of beneficial outcomes for similar compacts, such as the interstate medical licensure compact for the physicians¹, and the enhanced nurse licensure compact for nurses².

While beneficial, piecemeal solutions through compacts have led to several logistical problems attempting to modernize healthcare legislation, develop continuing education programs, and in developing differential licensure systems for each profession.

An alternative, which has found great success in attracting skilled workers, is universal licensing recognition³, where all licenses in good standing within other states are recognized. The states which have chosen to address all professions at once, rather than piecemeal, have been more flexible and responsive, bolstering their state workforce and access to safe, high quality, cost effective medical care.

In summary, while this compact does have potential benefits, the research suggests there is a more efficient pathway to beneficial economic outcomes through universal licensing recognition.

Best regards,

-

alin Pennos

¹ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4755497

² https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12122-022-09333-2

³ https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165176522002920

TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAY SHELDON NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD BEFORE THE SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPEMENT COMMITTEE 21 FEBRUARY 2025 HOUSE BILL 1035

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jay Sheldon, and I am here representing the North Dakota Military Commission to express support for HB 1035, which would have North Dakota join an interstate licensing compact for social workers.

North Dakota recognizes the unique challenges faced by these families, particularly the frequent relocations that come with military service. For military spouses who are licensed social workers, moving to a new state can involve navigating varied licensure requirements, which can delay their ability to provide services and support to our communities.

By joining the social work licensing compact, North Dakota would facilitate a smoother transition for these professionals, allowing licensed social workers from the other 22 compact member states (15 pending legislation) to practice in our state with reduced administrative burdens. This is crucial as we continue to address the increasing demand for social work services in our communities, especially considering growing awareness around mental health, child welfare, and family support.

Supporting this compact not only helps military families but also enhances the overall capacity of our social service systems. It enables our communities to tap into a broader pool of qualified social workers who can provide critical services to those in need, including the military connected population.

Adopting this compact demonstrates North Dakota's commitment to being a military-friendly state and reinforces our dedication to ensuring that all residents have access to the support they need. By reducing barriers for social workers, we can foster a more effective and responsive system that addresses the diverse needs of our entire population.

On behalf of the North Dakota Military Commission, I ask you to support HB 1035.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

701.557.1500 » info.naswnd@socialworkers.org » naswnd.socialworkers.org



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



2025 HB 1035 Senate Workforce Development Committee Senator Mike Wobbema, Chairman February 21, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, I am Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP, of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I am here to testify in support of House Bill 1035. I ask that you give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

North Dakota is in need of additional mental health service providers, especially in rural areas where access can be difficult. Even in more urban areas, hospitals struggle to find enough social workers to meet the demand. Hospitals support the bill because it would streamline the interstate practice of social worker by improving public access to competent social work services. And the compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.

Under the Social Work Licensure Compact, social workers can get a multistate license, which clears them to care for clients in a participating state, even if they don't live there. Social workers must abide by the laws of the state where the client resides. The compact alleviates barriers to practice and increases access to care, especially in areas that are underserved, geographically isolated or lack specialty care, by increasing the speed and efficiency of becoming licensed across state lines. Currently, social workers must seek a separate license in each state in which they wish to practice, which can be labor, time and financially intensive. A compact creates a more efficient processing system, while also protecting public safety. Other overall benefits of joining the compact include:

- Facilitating interstate telehealth mental health services
- Encouraging cooperation among compact member states/territories in regulating the practice of social work
- Preserving and strengthening state licensure systems

Other professions have similar interstate licensing compacts that have worked well to make licensing across state lines faster and more efficient, such as the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC), the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact (APRN Compact), the Physical Therapy Compact (PT Compact), and the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). From hospitals' perspective, additional benefits of adopting this particular compact are that it will:

- Facilitate telehealth
- Support mental health workforce needs across North Dakota
- Streamlines licensing administration for both licensing boards and licensed social workers
- Promote continuity of care when social workers or clients relocate
- Allow social workers to expand services into new markets, especially rural areas

In summary, we support passage of this bill and hope that you will give it a Do Pass recommendation.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP North Dakota Hospital Association



Letter of Support – HB 1035

Friday, February 21st, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1035.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. We believe the passage of this legislation will further improve the state's workforce landscape. By adopting this licensure compact for social workers, North Dakota will streamline the licensing process and enhance its ability to attract skilled professionals while promoting cooperation with neighboring compact member states, such as Minnesota and South Dakota.

Additionally, this bill provides greater flexibility for military spouses who are often highly qualified but face barriers when relocating due to military orders. By reducing burdensome and duplicative licensing requirements, we empower these individuals to continue their professional careers, contributing to our local economy and enriching our communities.

House Bill 1035 is a vital step in improving the workforce environment in North Dakota, enhancing our ability to attract talent from across the nation. We encourage this committee and the Legislative Assembly to support this bill, along with other initiatives, to help us address our state's critical workforce challenges.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely

Cale Dunwoody

Vice President of Public Policy

Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce



Senate Workforce Development Committee Testimony In Support of House Bill #1035 2-20-25

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Kasowski, Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I am here in support of House Bill 1035.

Each year across North Dakota, Children's Advocacy Centers provide direct services to more than 3,000 victims of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, and other forms of child maltreatment. At each of our 11 locations, we function as a **centralized hub for child abuse cases** where our partners in law enforcement, human services, prosecution, medical, mental health, and victim advocacy all work collaboratively to help victims of child abuse.

The social work licensure compact offers many benefits to our state. A primary benefit for our Children's Advocacy Centers will be our ability to **increase access to and continuity of mental health care for our clients**, ultimately improving the mental well-being of children.

Many of the children we serve come from split homes; and oftentimes parents reside in different states. When the school year concludes for kids in the month of May, it's not uncommon for them to live with a caregiver temporarily in another state. Thus, while in the middle of working through their horrific trauma, these children move to a different location and may not be able to find services for a variety of reasons (e.g., long wait lists). Furthermore, the child is deprived of the established rapport and trust they have with their North Dakota clinician. This leads to increased stress, difficulty sleeping or eating, and behavioral problems.

Summer break is not the only time this continuity of service is interrupted. Since more than 90% of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts, families are often compelled to relocate for safety or to just get away from the place where the abuse happened.

The social work licensure compact would allow our licensed social workers to provide continuity of care through tele mental health services while the child is in another state that is part of the compact.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, and I will stand for any questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Kasowski Executive Director





OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 21, 2025

Chairman Mike Wobbema Chair, Senate Workforce Development Committee

Remarks of
Michelle Richart
Midwest Regional Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office

Support of: HB 1035 – Social Work Licensure Compact

Testimony

The Department of Defense is grateful for the opportunity to support policy changes proposed in North Dakota HB 1035, regarding the Social Work Licensure Compact, a measure to reduce barriers to social work licensing and employment in North Dakota.

My name is Michelle Richart and I am the Midwest Regional Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We represent the Department and work with state leaders across the country who are concerned for troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. These are identified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the National Guard Bureau as areas where states can play a crucial role.

The Department of Defense has advocated for improved licensure and career portability for military Service members and their spouses for several years. Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific professional licensing requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment, with thirty-six percent requiring a state license to practice in their professions and an annual cross-state relocation rate more than ten times higher than their civilian counterparts. Accordingly, military spouses experience unemployment and underemployment at significantly higher rates than their civilian peers.

State policies enacting interstate licensure compacts, such as the Social Work Licensure Compact, relieve one of the many stressors of frequent military moves by enabling military spouses to transfer their licenses more quickly across state lines and obtain employment as soon as they relocate to a new state. These policies facilitate greater career sustainability for military spouses, improving their families' financial security and overall resilience.

Interstate licensure compacts benefit not only military spouses, but also apply to all eligible professionals to include active-duty Service members, members of the reserve components, veterans, and civilians. By continuing to enact these beneficial policies, North Dakota can expand the opportunity to increase its workforce available to serve the local community while

continuing in its great tradition of providing an extraordinary degree of support to our military families as they move into and out of the state.

In closing, the Department of Defense is very appreciative of North Dakota's ongoing commitment and efforts to support members of the military and their families who sacrifice much in service to our country. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide comments in support of this policy proposal.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Very Respectfully,

MICHELLE RICHART

Midwest Regional Liaison Defense-State Liaison Office

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Senate Workforce Development Committee
Chairman Senator Wobbema



February 21, 2025

Testimony of: Kate Coughlin Executive Director | Nexus-PATH Family Healing

kcoughlin@nexuspath.org | Direct: (218) 979-0180

Responding to the Children's Behavioral Health Crisis: Support for House Bill 1035 and the adoption of the social work licensure compact

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Kate Coughlin, Executive Director Nexus-PATH Family Healing.

Our nation's leading pediatric health experts have declared the children's behavioral health crisis so dire that it warrants a national emergency. In 2021, over 35% of ND high school students – grades 9-12 – reported feeling persistent sadness or hopelessness and nearly 1 in 5 reported seriously considering dying by suicide within the past 12-months (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021), equating to approximately 6,818 youth across the state. The challenges of recent years have only increased the need for timely access to high-quality mental health services.

Failure to ensure that mental health services are available when and where people need them has dire consequences for individuals, families and communities throughout North Dakota. In the current system, only four counties have the mental health resources their population requires. Only if you live in one of these more densely populated counties can adequate services be found.

As the Executive Director of a children's mental health care provider, I can attest to the acute need to improve access to care by addressing workforce shortages while maintaining our high standards for professional practice. The adoption of the Social Work Licensure Compact provides an opportunity to do so and to improve the lives of countless children and families.

First and foremost, the Social Work Licensure Compact would enhance access to care for children, particularly in underserved and rural communities. By enabling licensed social workers to practice across member states without obtaining additional licensure, the compact allows mental health providers to quickly fill workforce gaps. This flexibility is especially vital in addressing urgent needs, such as those that arise in crisis situations and in areas with persistent shortages of qualified mental health professionals. Furthermore, the compact facilitates the provision of telehealth services, ensuring that children in remote areas can receive the support they need without delay.

The compact also establishes consistent standards for licensure, providing assurance that all participating social workers meet rigorous qualifications, regardless of their state of origin. This standardization not only safeguards the quality of care but also reduces administrative burdens for providers navigating a patchwork of state-specific licensure requirements. By streamlining these processes, the compact will

allow my organization and its providers to focus their resources on delivering care rather than navigating complex bureaucratic hurdles.

The Passage of the Social Work Licensure Compact will enable providers to recruit from a broader pool of qualified social workers, reducing delays in onboarding and ensuring that critical positions can be filled more efficiently. This is especially valuable in the context of children's mental health care, where perpetual workforce shortages are experienced sharply.

Additionally, the compact supports continuity of care for families who relocate across state lines, such as military families or those moving to North Dakota for our boundless economic opportunities. Children can maintain relationships with their trusted social workers, ensuring stability and uninterrupted support during times of transition while providing a more simple exchange as patients change providers.

The compact can also help address the broader workforce shortage in mental health care. By easing the approval process for social workers to move between states, it reduces barriers to entry and expands the availability of skilled professionals to serve the people of North Dakota. This increased mobility benefits mental health providers and creates options for local communities. In addition, the administrative cost savings achieved through streamlined licensing processes may allow us to allocate resources more effectively, improving the supply and delivery of care.

Nexus-PATH supports the adoption of the social work licensure compact as proposed in HB 1035 and supports the passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this critical issue affecting the state of North Dakota.

We ask for a "DO PASS" recommendation for HB 1035.

NORTH DAKOTA MENTAL HEALTH HPSA - 2023

Mental Health - Health Professional Shortage Areas

