

HCS HB 1399 -- SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT

SPONSOR: Coleman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Healthcare Reform by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1399.

This bill allows any person who holds a valid current social worker license issued by another state, a branch or unit of the military, a territory of the United States, or the District of Columbia, who has been licensed for at least one year in that location, to apply for a social worker license in Missouri. The State Committee for Social Workers can waive any examination, educational requirements, or experience requirements for the licensure if the State Committee for Social Workers determines that the applicant has met the minimum education and work experience in the other territory. The State Committee for Social Workers will not waive the requirements if:

- (1) The applicant had his or her license revoked by an oversight body;
- (2) The applicant is currently under investigation;
- (3) The applicant has a complaint pending;
- (4) The applicant is currently under administrative disciplinary action;
- (5) The applicant does not hold a license in good standing with an oversight body outside of Missouri; or
- (6) The applicant has a criminal conviction that would disqualify him or her for licensure in Missouri.

This bill establishes the "Social Work Licensure Compact".

The Compact allows a social worker who meets the eligibility requirements to receive an expedited license. A social worker may renew his or her expedited license as a member of the Compact. The Compact establishes a confidential database of all social workers who have been granted an expedited license or who have applied for an expedited license, for the purpose of allowing member states to report disciplinary or investigatory information.

Member states may participate in joint investigations of social workers with other member states, and any disciplinary action taken by one member state may subject the social worker to discipline by other member states. If a social worker's license is revoked, surrendered, or relinquished in one state, the social worker's multi-state authorization to practice in all other member states will be deactivated until all encumbrances have been removed from the multi-state license.

The Compact establishes the "Social Work Licensure Compact Commission" to act as a corporate and joint agency of the member states and to oversee and maintain administration of the Compact.

The Compact outlines procedures for any member state that fails to perform its obligations under the Compact.

The Compact will only be effective once seven states have enacted legislation to join the Compact.

The Compact outlines the procedure to withdraw from the Compact.

The Compact supersedes all other laws that conflict with provisions of the Compact.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this Compact represents a way to expand care access, as well as workforce opportunities. With Missouri bordering eight other states, around 21% of Missouri's licensees reside in other states and commute in, or conduct their casework via telecommunication options. Rural counties in the state would benefit most from these expansions, including specialized services, and that cost-prohibitive licensure requirements would be eliminated. Finally, if Missouri were among the first handful of states to pass the Compact, the state would gain additional advantage through its position on the Compact Commission.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Coleman; National Association of Social Workers - Missouri Chapter; and Associated Students for the University of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced in person to the committee.

Testifying against the bill was Arnie C. Dienoff.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the Compact had been developed in accordance with the Department of Defense, and through the Compact, military families will be able to designate and retain a "home state" to ensure their partnership in the Compact. There have been nine other states who have introduced Compact language, and from a regulatory perspective, the state would retain its right to protect its health and welfare under existing structures relating to laws, rules, and the scope of practice in the state of licensure and state of practice.

Testifying in person on the bill was Matt Shafer, The Council of State Governments.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.