

My name is Ann Roselle; I am a nurse practitioner from Bethany, Connecticut.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of raised H.B 5071, an act requiring Connecticut to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement regarding distance learning; commonly known as the SARA compact.

The SARA compact was initiated in 2010 to allow for equal standards among schools, particularly with programs that had a clinical component such as nursing, social work or physician assistant programs to name a few ensuring standardization of said program, while also securing oversight and affordability for interstate offerings.

I first learned of the SARA compact in my attempts over the summer of 2015 to pursue education beyond a Master's degree. I have become passionate about improving mental health services and wanted to leave the realm of acute care and obtain a post-master's psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner board certification and my doctorate of nursing practice. In the state of Connecticut, this is not possible to complete either online or as a single degree. It would mean loss of income for 18 months for the post-master's certificate and 2-3 years to complete the doctorate degree, which is not feasible as a parent of three children, twins age 5 and a 7 year old. I could work part-time, but again, it would place a significant financial strain on my or any family. I found an online program which matched my educational values and additionally both competitive and nationally ranked in the Midwest. I could continue to work full-time with the ability to complete the online classes in the evenings and on weekends. The post-master's certificate is incorporated into the doctoral work and I would be expected to complete the entire program in 2.5 years. Except Connecticut does not participate in the SARA compact and thus I am ineligible to apply, despite being told I am an excellent, competitive applicant.

Lastly, my current board certification exam retired in 2015. This year I can recertify for the final time under informal continuing education. I will be forced to find an formal educational program no later than 2018 for my next recertification date in 2021 thus making passage of H.B. 5071 all the more critical for individual like myself who are driven with higher educational goals.

This compact is critical to my future and being able to further the healthcare of Connecticut's citizens in a meaningful way. Allowing H.B. 5071 to pass would allow residents like myself to pursue a higher education without moving out of Connecticut to do so. Additionally, Americans who live in other states will have the opportunity to use the Internet to seek an education within our borders that they currently lack the opportunity to creating a win-win situation for all.

In summary, H.B 5071 is an essential bill to our higher educational system in Connecticut which would not only allow us to continue moving forward in an

environment increasingly friendly to distance learning, but would make Connecticut more appealing to individuals in others as we have many schools that would now be accessible which once were not. Current residents would have the ability to access programs in other states that matched their educational values in a meaningful way, fitting with family and employment. I urge you to support and pass this bill.

Thank you Honorable Chairpersons Dante Bartolomeo, Roberta Willis and the other members of the committee for this opportunity.

I would be happy to answer further questions should the need arise.

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Respectfully,
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