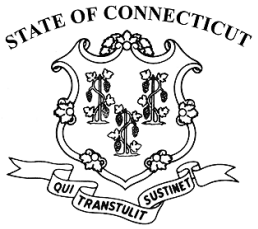

House Bill No. 5197

Public Act No. 24-30

AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL WORKERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Social Work Licensure Compact is hereby enacted into law and entered into by the state of Connecticut with any and all jurisdictions legally joining therein in accordance with its terms. The compact is substantially as follows:

SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the compact is to facilitate interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving public access to competent social work services. The compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure. The compact is designed to achieve the following objectives:

(1) Increase public access to social work services;

(2) Reduce overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with holding multiple licenses;

(3) Enhance the member states' ability to protect public health and

safety;

(4) Encourage the cooperation of member states in regulating multistate practice;

(5) Promote mobility and address workforce shortages by eliminating the necessity for licenses in multiple states by providing for the mutual recognition of other member states' licenses;

(6) Support military families;

(7) Facilitate the exchange of licensure and disciplinary information among member states;

(8) Authorize all member states to hold a regulated social worker accountable for abiding by a member state's laws, regulations and applicable professional standards in the member state in which the client is located at the time care is rendered; and

(9) Allow for the use of telehealth to facilitate increased access to regulated social work services.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in the compact, except as otherwise provided:

(1) "Active military member" means any individual with full-time duty status in the active armed forces of the United States, including, but not limited to, members of the National Guard and Reserve.

(2) "Adverse action" means any administrative, civil, equitable or criminal action permitted by a state's laws that is imposed by a licensing authority or other authority against a regulated social worker, including actions against an individual's license or multistate authorization to practice, including, but not limited to, revocation, suspension, probation, monitoring of the licensee, limitation on the licensee's

practice or any other encumbrance on licensure affecting a regulated social worker's authorization to practice, including, but not limited to, the issuance of a cease and desist action.

(3) "Alternative program" means a nondisciplinary monitoring or practice remediation process approved by a licensing authority to address practitioners with an impairment.

(4) "Charter member state" means a member state that has enacted legislation to adopt the compact, which legislation predates the effective date of the compact as described in section 14 of the compact.

(5) "Compact" means the Social Work Licensure Compact enacted into law and entered into by the state pursuant to this section.

(6) "Compact commission" or "commission" means the government agency described in section 10 of the compact as the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission whose membership consists of all states that have enacted the compact and that operates as an instrumentality of the member states.

(7) "Current significant investigative information" means investigative information that:

(A) A licensing authority, after a preliminary inquiry that includes notification and an opportunity for the regulated social worker to respond, has reason to believe is not groundless and, if proved true, would indicate more than a minor infraction, as may be defined by the commission; or

(B) Indicates that the regulated social worker represents an immediate threat to public health and safety, as may be defined by the commission, regardless of whether the regulated social worker has been notified and has had an opportunity to respond.

(8) "Data system" means a repository of information about licensees, including continuing education, examination, licensure, current significant investigative information, disqualifying events, multistate license and adverse action information or other information as required by the commission.

(9) "Disqualifying event" means any adverse action or incident that results in an encumbrance that disqualifies or makes the licensee ineligible to either obtain, retain or renew a multistate license.

(10) "Domicile" means the jurisdiction in which the licensee resides and intends to remain indefinitely.

(11) "Encumbrance" means a revocation or suspension of, or any limitation on, the full and unrestricted practice of social work licensed and regulated by a licensing authority.

(12) "Executive committee" means a group of delegates elected or appointed to act on behalf of, and within the powers granted to them by, the compact and commission.

(13) "Home state" means the member state that is the licensee's primary domicile.

(14) "Impairment" means a condition that may impair a practitioner's ability to engage in full and unrestricted practice as a regulated social worker without some type of intervention and may include alcohol and drug dependence, a mental health impairment or a neurological or physical impairment.

(15) "Licensee" means an individual who holds a license from a state to practice as a regulated social worker.

(16) "Licensing authority" means the board or agency of a member state, or the equivalent, that is responsible for the licensing and

regulation of regulated social workers.

(17) "Member state" means a state, commonwealth, district or territory of the United States that has enacted the compact.

(18) "Multistate authorization to practice" means a legally authorized privilege to practice that is equivalent to a license and associated with a multistate license permitting the practice of social work in a remote state.

(19) "Multistate license" means a license to practice as a regulated social worker issued by a home state licensing authority that authorizes the regulated social worker to practice in all member states under multistate authorization to practice.

(20) "Qualifying national exam" means a national licensing examination approved by the commission.

(21) "Regulated social worker" means any clinical, master's or bachelor's social worker licensed by a member state regardless of the title used by such member state.

(22) "Remote state" means a member state other than the licensee's home state.

(23) "Rule" or "rule of the commission" means a regulation or regulations duly promulgated by the commission, as authorized by the compact, that has the force of law.

(24) "Single state license" means a social work license issued by any state that authorizes practice only within the issuing state and does not include multistate authorization to practice in any member state.

(25) "Social work" or "social work services" means the application of social work theory, knowledge, methods, ethics and the professional use of self to restore or enhance social, psychosocial or biopsychosocial

functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities through the care and services provided by a regulated social worker as set forth in the member state's statutes and regulations in the state where the services are being provided.

(26) "State" means any state, commonwealth, district or territory of the United States that regulates the practice of social work.

(27) "Unencumbered license" means a license that authorizes a regulated social worker to engage in the full and unrestricted practice of social work.

SECTION 3. STATE PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPACT

(a) To be eligible to participate in the compact, a potential member state shall:

(1) License and regulate the practice of social work at either the clinical, master's or bachelor's category;

(2) Require applicants for licensure to graduate from a program that is:

(A) Operated by a college or university recognized by the licensing authority;

(B) Accredited, or in candidacy by an institution that subsequently becomes accredited, by an accrediting agency recognized by either:

(i) The Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or its successor; or

(ii) The United States Department of Education; and

(C) Corresponds to the licensure sought as outlined in section 4 of the compact;

(3) Require applicants for clinical licensure to complete a period of supervised practice; and

(4) Have a mechanism in place for receiving, investigating and adjudicating complaints about licensees.

(b) To maintain membership in the compact, a member state shall:

(1) Require that applicants for a multistate license pass a qualifying national exam for the corresponding category of multistate license sought as outlined in section 4 of the compact;

(2) Participate fully in the commission's data system, including using the commission's unique identifier as defined in the rules of the commission;

(3) Notify the commission, in compliance with the terms of the compact and rules, of any adverse action or the availability of current significant investigative information regarding a licensee;

(4) Implement procedures for considering the criminal history records of applicants for a multistate license, which procedures shall include the submission of fingerprints or other biometric-based information by applicants for the purpose of obtaining an applicant's criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the agency responsible for retaining such state's criminal records;

(5) Comply with the rules of the commission;

(6) Require an applicant to obtain or retain a license in the home state and meet the home state's qualifications for licensure or renewal of licensure, as well as all other applicable home state laws;

(7) Authorize a licensee holding a multistate license in any member state to practice in accordance with the terms of the compact and rules

of the commission; and

(8) Designate a delegate to participate in the commission meetings.

(c) A member state meeting the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section of the compact shall designate the categories of social work licensure that are eligible for issuance of a multistate license for applicants in such member state. To the extent that any member state does not meet the requirements for participation in the compact at any particular category of social work licensure, such member state may choose to issue a multistate license to applicants that otherwise meet the requirements of section 4 of the compact for issuance of a multistate license in such category or categories of licensure.

(d) The home state may charge a fee for granting the multistate license.

SECTION 4. SOCIAL WORKER PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPACT

(a) To be eligible for a multistate license under the terms and provisions of the compact, an applicant, regardless of category shall:

(1) Hold or be eligible for an active, unencumbered license in the home state;

(2) Pay any applicable fees, including any state fee, for the multistate license;

(3) Submit, in connection with an application for a multistate license, fingerprints or other biometric data for the purpose of obtaining criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the agency responsible for retaining such state's criminal records;

(4) Notify the home state of any adverse action, encumbrance or

restriction on any professional license taken by any member state or nonmember state not later than thirty days after the date the action has been taken;

(5) Meet any continuing competence requirements established by the home state; and

(6) Abide by the laws, regulations and applicable standards in the member state where the client is located at the time care is rendered.

(b) An applicant for a clinical-category multistate license shall meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Fulfill a competency requirement that shall be satisfied by either:

(A) Passage of a clinical-category qualifying national exam;

(B) Licensure of the applicant in the applicant's home state at the clinical category, beginning prior to such time as a qualifying national exam was required by the home state and accompanied by a period of continuous social work licensure thereafter, all of which may be further governed by the rules of the commission; or

(C) The substantial equivalency of the foregoing competency requirements that the commission may determine by rule.

(2) Attain at least a master's degree in social work from a program that is:

(A) Operated by a college or university recognized by the licensing authority; and

(B) Accredited, or in candidacy that subsequently becomes accredited, by an accrediting agency recognized by either:

(i) The Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or its successor;

or

(ii) The United States Department of Education.

(3) Fulfill a practice requirement that shall be satisfied by demonstrating completion of either:

(A) A period of postgraduate supervised clinical practice equal to a minimum of three thousand hours;

(B) A minimum of two years of full-time postgraduate supervised clinical practice; or

(C) The substantial equivalency of the foregoing practice requirements that the commission may determine by rule.

(c) An applicant for a master's-category multistate license shall meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Fulfill a competency requirement that shall be satisfied by either:

(A) Passage of a master's-category qualifying national exam;

(B) Licensure of the applicant in the applicant's home state at the master's category, beginning prior to such time as a qualifying national exam was required by the home state at the master's category and accompanied by a continuous period of social work licensure thereafter, all of which may be further governed by the rules of the commission; or

(C) The substantial equivalency of the foregoing competency requirements that the commission may determine by rule.

(2) Attain at least a master's degree in social work from a program that is:

(A) Operated by a college or university recognized by the licensing authority; and

(B) Accredited, or in candidacy that subsequently becomes accredited, by an accrediting agency recognized by either:

(i) The Council for Higher Education Accreditation or its successor; or

(ii) The United States Department of Education.

(d) An applicant for a bachelor's-category multistate license shall meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Fulfill a competency requirement that shall be satisfied by either:

(A) Passage of a bachelor's-category qualifying national exam;

(B) Licensure of the applicant in the applicant's home state at the bachelor's category, beginning prior to such time as a qualifying national exam was required by the home state and accompanied by a period of continuous social work licensure thereafter, all of which may be further governed by the rules of the commission; or

(C) The substantial equivalency of the foregoing competency requirements that the commission may determine by rule.

(2) Attain at least a bachelor's degree in social work from a program that is:

(A) Operated by a college or university recognized by the licensing authority; and

(B) Accredited, or in candidacy that subsequently becomes accredited, by an accrediting agency recognized by either:

(i) The Council for Higher Education Accreditation or its successor; or

(ii) The United States Department of Education.

(e) The multistate license for a regulated social worker is subject to the renewal requirements of the home state. The regulated social worker shall maintain compliance with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section of the compact to be eligible to renew a multistate license.

(f) The regulated social worker's services in a remote state are subject to such member state's regulatory authority. A remote state may, in accordance with due process and such member state's laws, remove a regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice in the remote state for a specific period of time, impose fines and take any other necessary actions to protect the health and safety of its citizens.

(g) If a multistate license is encumbered, the regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice shall be deactivated in all remote states until the multistate license is no longer encumbered.

(h) If a multistate authorization to practice is encumbered in a remote state, the regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice may be deactivated in such state until the multistate authorization to practice is no longer encumbered.

SECTION 5. ISSUANCE OF A MULTISTATE LICENSE

(a) Upon receipt of an application for multistate license, the home state licensing authority shall determine the applicant's eligibility for a multistate license in accordance with section 4 of the compact.

(b) If such applicant is eligible pursuant to section 4 of the compact, the home state licensing authority shall issue a multistate license that authorizes the applicant or regulated social worker to practice in all member states under a multistate authorization to practice.

(c) Upon issuance of a multistate license, the home state licensing authority shall designate whether the regulated social worker holds a multistate license in the bachelor's, master's or clinical category of social

work.

(d) A multistate license issued by a home state to a resident in such state shall be recognized by all compact member states as authorizing social work practice under a multistate authorization to practice corresponding to each category of licensure regulated in each member state.

SECTION 6. AUTHORITY OF INTERSTATE COMPACT COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATE LICENSING AUTHORITIES

(a) Nothing in the compact, or any rule of the commission, shall be construed to limit, restrict or in any way reduce the ability of a member state to enact and enforce laws, regulations or other rules related to the practice of social work in such state, where such laws, regulations or other rules are not inconsistent with the provisions of the compact.

(b) Nothing in the compact shall affect the requirements established by a member state for the issuance of a single state license.

(c) Nothing in the compact, or any rule of the commission, shall be construed to limit, restrict or in any way reduce the ability of a member state to take adverse action against a licensee's single state license to practice social work in such state.

(d) Nothing in the compact, or any rule of the commission, shall be construed to limit, restrict or in any way reduce the ability of a remote state to take adverse action against a licensee's multistate authorization to practice in such state.

(e) Nothing in the compact, or any rule of the commission, shall be construed to limit, restrict or in any way reduce the ability of a licensee's home state to take adverse action against a licensee's multistate license based upon information provided by a remote state.

SECTION 7. REISSUANCE OF A MULTISTATE LICENSE BY A NEW HOME STATE

(a) A licensee may hold a multistate license, issued by the licensee's home state, in only one member state at any given time.

(b) If a licensee changes the licensee's home state by moving between two member states:

(1) The licensee shall immediately apply for the reissuance of the licensee's multistate license in the licensee's new home state. The licensee shall pay all applicable fees and notify the prior home state in accordance with the rules of the commission.

(2) Upon receipt of an application to reissue a multistate license, the new home state shall verify that the multistate license is active, unencumbered and eligible for reissuance under the terms of the compact and the rules of the commission. The multistate license issued by the prior home state shall be deactivated and all member states shall be notified in accordance with the applicable rules adopted by the commission.

(3) Prior to the reissuance of the multistate license, the new home state shall conduct procedures for considering the criminal history records of the licensee. Such procedures shall include the submission of fingerprints or other biometric-based information by applicants for the purpose of obtaining an applicant's criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the agency responsible for retaining such state's criminal records.

(4) If required for initial licensure, the new home state may require completion of jurisprudence requirements in the new home state.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of the compact, if a licensee does not meet the requirements set forth in the compact for the

reissuance of a multistate license by the new home state, then the licensee shall be subject to the new home state requirements for the issuance of a single state license in such state.

(c) If a licensee changes the licensee's primary state of residence by moving from a member state to a nonmember state, or from a nonmember state to a member state, then the licensee shall be subject to the state requirements for the issuance of a single state license in the new home state.

(d) Nothing in the compact shall interfere with a licensee's ability to hold a single state license in multiple states. For the purposes of the compact, a licensee shall have only one home state and only one multistate license.

(e) Nothing in the compact shall interfere with the requirements established by a member state for the issuance of a single state license.

SECTION 8. MILITARY FAMILIES

An active military member or the active military member's spouse shall designate a home state where the individual has a multistate license. The individual may retain the individual's home state designation during the period the service member is on active duty.

SECTION 9. ADVERSE ACTIONS

(a) In addition to the other powers conferred by state law, a remote state shall have the authority, in accordance with state due process law, to:

(1) Take adverse action against a regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice only within such member state, and issue subpoenas for both hearings and investigations that require the attendance and testimony of witnesses as well as the production of

evidence. Subpoenas issued by a licensing authority in a member state for the attendance and testimony of witnesses or the production of evidence from another member state shall be enforced in the latter state by any court of competent jurisdiction, according to the practice and procedure of that court applicable to subpoenas issued in proceedings pending before it. The issuing licensing authority shall pay any witness fees, travel expenses, mileage and other fees required by the service statutes of the state in which the witnesses or evidence are located.

(2) Only the home state shall have the power to take adverse action against a regulated social worker's multistate license.

(b) For purposes of taking adverse action, the home state shall give the same priority and effect to reported conduct received from a member state as it would if the conduct had occurred within the home state. In so doing, the home state shall apply its own state laws to determine appropriate action.

(c) The home state shall complete any pending investigations of a regulated social worker who changes the regulated social worker's home state during the course of the investigations. The home state shall also have the authority to take appropriate action and shall promptly report the conclusions of the investigations to the administrator of the data system. The administrator of the data system shall promptly notify the new home state of any adverse actions.

(d) A member state, if otherwise permitted by state law, may recover from the affected regulated social worker the costs of investigations and dispositions of cases resulting from any adverse action taken against such regulated social worker.

(e) A member state may take adverse action based on the factual findings of another member state, provided that the member state follows its own procedures for taking the adverse action.

(f) Joint investigations:

(1) In addition to the authority granted to a member state by its respective social work practice act or other applicable state law, any member state may participate with other member states in joint investigations of licensees.

(2) Member states shall share any investigative, litigation or compliance materials in furtherance of any joint or individual investigation initiated under the compact.

(g) If adverse action is taken by the home state against the multistate license of a regulated social worker, the regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice in all other member states shall be deactivated until all encumbrances have been removed from the multistate license. All home state disciplinary orders that impose adverse action against the license of a regulated social worker shall include a statement that the regulated social worker's multistate authorization to practice is deactivated in all member states until all conditions of the decision, order or agreement are satisfied.

(h) If a member state takes adverse action, it shall promptly notify the administrator of the data system. The administrator of the data system shall promptly notify the home state and all other member states of any adverse actions by remote states.

(i) Nothing in the compact shall override a member state's decision that participation in an alternative program may be used in lieu of adverse action.

(j) Nothing in the compact shall authorize a member state to demand the issuance of subpoenas for attendance and testimony of witnesses or the production of evidence from another member state for lawful actions within such member state.

(k) Nothing in the compact shall authorize a member state to impose discipline against a regulated social worker who holds a multistate authorization to practice for lawful actions within another member state.

SECTION 10. ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT COMMISSION

(a) The compact member states hereby create and establish a joint government agency whose membership consists of all member states that have enacted the compact known as the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission. The commission is an instrumentality of the compact states acting jointly and not an instrumentality of any one state. The commission shall come into existence on or after the effective date of the compact as set forth in section 14 of the compact.

(b) Membership, voting and meetings:

(1) Each member state shall have and be limited to one delegate selected by such member state's state licensing authority.

(2) The delegate shall be either:

(A) A current member of the state licensing authority at the time of appointment, who is a regulated social worker or public member of the state licensing authority; or

(B) An administrator of the state licensing authority, or the administrator's designee.

(3) The commission shall by rule or bylaw establish a term of office for delegates and may by rule or bylaw establish term limits.

(4) The commission may recommend removal or suspension of any delegate from office.

(5) A member state's licensing authority shall fill any vacancy of its delegate occurring on the commission not later than sixty days after the vacancy.

(6) Each delegate shall be entitled to one vote on all matters before the commission requiring a vote by commission delegates.

(7) A delegate shall vote in person or by such other means as provided in the bylaws. The bylaws may provide for delegates to meet by telecommunication, video conference or other means of communication.

(8) The commission shall meet at least once during each calendar year. Additional meetings may be held as set forth in the bylaws. The commission may meet by telecommunication, video conference or other similar electronic means.

(c) The commission shall have the following powers:

(1) Establish the fiscal year of the commission;

(2) Establish code of conduct and conflict of interest policies;

(3) Establish and amend rules and bylaws;

(4) Maintain its financial records in accordance with the bylaws;

(5) Meet and take such actions as are consistent with the provisions of the compact, the commission's rules and the bylaws;

(6) Initiate and conclude legal proceedings or actions in the name of the commission, provided the standing of any state licensing board to sue or be sued under applicable law shall not be affected;

(7) Maintain and certify records and information provided to a member state as the authenticated business records of the commission,

and designate an agent to do so on the commission's behalf;

(8) Purchase and maintain insurance and bonds;

(9) Borrow, accept or contract for services of personnel, including, but not limited to, employees of a member state;

(10) Conduct an annual financial review;

(11) Hire employees, elect or appoint officers, fix compensation, define duties, grant such individuals appropriate authority to carry out the purposes of the compact and establish the commission's personnel policies and programs relating to conflicts of interest, qualifications of personnel and other related personnel matters;

(12) Assess and collect fees;

(13) Accept any and all appropriate gifts, donations, grants of money, other sources of revenue, equipment, supplies, materials and services, and receive, utilize and dispose of the same, provided, at all times, the commission shall avoid any appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest;

(14) Lease, purchase, retain, own, hold, improve or use any property, real, personal or mixed or any undivided interest therein;

(15) Sell, convey, mortgage, pledge, lease, exchange, abandon or otherwise dispose of any property real, personal or mixed;

(16) Establish a budget and make expenditures;

(17) Borrow money;

(18) Appoint committees, including standing committees, composed of members, state regulators, state legislators, or their representatives, and consumer representatives, and such other interested persons as

may be designated in the compact and the bylaws;

(19) Provide and receive information from, and cooperate with, law enforcement agencies;

(20) Establish and elect an executive committee, including a chairperson and a vice-chairperson;

(21) Determine whether a state's adopted language is materially different from the model compact language such that the state would not qualify for participation in the compact; and

(22) Perform such other functions as may be necessary or appropriate to achieve the purposes of the compact.

(d) The executive committee:

(1) The executive committee shall have the power to act on behalf of the commission according to the terms of the compact. The powers, duties and responsibilities of the executive committee shall include:

(A) Oversee the day-to-day activities of the administration of the compact, including enforcement and compliance with the provisions of the compact, its rules and bylaws and other such duties as deemed necessary;

(B) Recommend to the commission changes to the rules or bylaws, changes to the compact legislation, fees charged to compact member states, fees charged to licensees and other fees;

(C) Ensure compact administration services are appropriately provided, including by contract;

(D) Prepare and recommend the budget;

(E) Maintain financial records on behalf of the commission;

(F) Monitor compact compliance of member states and provide compliance reports to the commission;

(G) Establish additional committees as necessary;

(H) Exercise the powers and duties of the commission during the interim between commission meetings, except for adopting or amending rules, adopting or amending bylaws and exercising any other powers and duties expressly reserved to the commission by rule or bylaw; and

(I) Other duties as provided in the rules or bylaws of the commission.

(2) The executive committee shall be composed of not more than eleven members:

(A) The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the commission shall be voting members of the executive committee.

(B) The commission shall elect five voting members from the current membership of the commission.

(C) Up to four ex-officio, nonvoting members from four recognized national social work organizations.

(D) The ex-officio members shall be selected by their respective organizations.

(3) The commission may remove any member of the executive committee as provided in the commission's bylaws.

(4) The executive committee shall meet at least annually.

(A) Executive committee meetings shall be open to the public, except the executive committee may meet in a closed, nonpublic meeting as provided in subdivision (2) of subsection (f) of this section of the

compact.

(B) The executive committee shall give seven days' notice of its meetings, posted on its Internet web site and as determined to provide notice to persons with an interest in the business of the commission.

(C) The executive committee may hold a special meeting in accordance with subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (f) of this section of the compact.

(e) The commission shall adopt and provide to the member states an annual report.

(f) Meetings of the commission:

(1) All meetings shall be open to the public, except the commission may meet in a closed, nonpublic meeting as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection of the compact.

(A) Public notice for all meetings of the full commission of meetings shall be given in the same manner as required under the rulemaking provisions in section 12 of the compact, except the commission may hold a special meeting as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision of the compact.

(B) The commission may hold a special meeting when it shall meet to conduct emergency business by giving forty-eight hours' notice to all commissioners on the commission's Internet web site and by other means as provided in the commission's rules. The commission's legal counsel shall certify that the commission's need to meet qualifies as an emergency.

(2) The commission or the executive committee or other committees of the commission may convene in a closed, nonpublic meeting for the commission or executive committee or other committees of the

commission to receive legal advice or to discuss:

(A) Noncompliance of a member state with its obligations under the compact;

(B) The employment, compensation, discipline or other matters, practices or procedures related to specific employees;

(C) Current or threatened discipline of a licensee by the commission or by a member state's licensing authority;

(D) Current, threatened or reasonably anticipated litigation;

(E) Negotiation of contracts for the purchase, lease or sale of goods, services or real estate;

(F) Accusing any person of a crime or formally censuring any person;

(G) Trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential;

(H) Information of a personal nature where disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(I) Investigative records compiled for law enforcement purposes;

(J) Information related to any investigative reports prepared by or on behalf of or for use of the commission or other committee charged with responsibility of investigation or determination of compliance issues pursuant to the compact;

(K) Matters specifically exempted from disclosure by federal or member state law; or

(L) Other matters as promulgated by the commission by rule.

(3) If a meeting, or portion of a meeting, is closed, the presiding officer

shall state that the meeting shall be closed and reference each relevant exempting provision, and such reference shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) The commission shall keep minutes that fully and clearly describe all matters discussed in a meeting and shall provide a full and accurate summary of actions taken, and the reasons therefore, including a description of the views expressed. All documents considered in connection with an action shall be identified in such minutes. All minutes and documents of a closed meeting shall remain under seal, subject to release only by a majority vote of the commission or order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(g) Financing of the commission:

(1) The commission shall pay, or provide for the payment of, the reasonable expenses of its establishment, organization and ongoing activities.

(2) The commission may accept any and all appropriate revenue sources as provided in subdivision (13) of subsection (c) of this section of the compact.

(3) The commission may levy on and collect an annual assessment from each member state and impose fees on licensees of member states to whom it grants a multistate license to cover the cost of the operations and activities of the commission and its staff, which shall be in a total amount sufficient to cover its annual budget as approved each year for which revenue is not provided by other sources. The aggregate annual assessment amount for member states shall be allocated based upon a formula that the commission shall promulgate by rule.

(4) The commission shall not incur obligations of any kind prior to securing the funds adequate to meet the same; nor shall the commission pledge the credit of any of the member states, except by and with the

authority of the member state.

(5) The commission shall keep accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements. The receipts and disbursements of the commission shall be subject to the financial review and accounting procedures established under its bylaws, except all receipts and disbursements of funds handled by the commission shall be subject to an annual financial review by a certified or licensed public accountant, and the report of the financial review shall be included in and become part of the annual report of the commission.

(h) Qualified immunity, defense and indemnification:

(1) The members, officers, executive director, employees and representatives of the commission shall be immune from suit and liability, both personally and in their official capacity, for any claim for damage to or loss of property or personal injury or other civil liability caused by or arising out of any actual or alleged act, error or omission that occurred, or that the person against whom the claim is made had a reasonable basis for believing occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or responsibilities, provided nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to protect any such person from suit or liability for any damage, loss, injury or liability caused by the intentional or wilful or wanton misconduct of that person. The procurement of insurance of any type by the commission shall not in any way compromise or limit the immunity granted hereunder.

(2) The commission shall defend any member, officer, executive director, employee or representative of the commission in any civil action seeking to impose liability arising out of any actual or alleged act, error or omission that occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or responsibilities, or as determined by the commission that the person against whom the claim is made had a reasonable basis for believing occurred within the scope of commission

employment, duties or responsibilities, provided (A) nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit such person from retaining their own counsel at their own expense, and (B) the actual or alleged act, error or omission did not result from that person's intentional or wilful or wanton misconduct.

(3) The commission shall indemnify and hold harmless any member, officer, executive director, employee or representative of the commission for the amount of any settlement or judgment obtained against that person arising out of any actual or alleged act, error or omission that occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or responsibilities, or that such person had a reasonable basis for believing occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or responsibilities, provided the actual or alleged act, error or omission did not result from the intentional or wilful or wanton misconduct of that person.

(4) Nothing in this section of the compact shall be construed as a limitation on the liability of any licensee for professional malpractice or misconduct that shall be governed solely by any other applicable state laws.

(5) Nothing in the compact shall be interpreted to waive or otherwise abrogate a member state's state action immunity or state action affirmative defense with respect to antitrust claims under the Sherman Act, 15 USC 1 et seq., as amended from time to time, Clayton Antitrust Act, 15 USC 12-27, as amended from time to time, or any other state or federal antitrust or anticompetitive law or regulation.

(6) Nothing in the compact shall be construed to be a waiver of sovereign immunity by the member states or by the commission.

SECTION 11. DATA SYSTEM

(a) The commission shall provide for the development, maintenance,

operation and utilization of a coordinated data system.

(b) The commission shall assign each applicant for a multistate license a unique identifier, as determined by the rules of the commission.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, a member state shall submit a uniform data set to the data system on all individuals to whom the compact is applicable as required by the rules of the commission, including:

(1) Identifying information;

(2) Licensure data;

(3) Adverse actions against a license and information related thereto;

(4) Nonconfidential information related to alternative program participation, the beginning and ending dates of such participation and other information related to such participation not made confidential under member state law;

(5) Any denial of application for licensure, and the reason for such denial;

(6) The presence of current significant investigative information; and

(7) Other information that may facilitate the administration of the compact or the protection of the public, as determined by the rules of the commission.

(d) The records and information provided to a member state pursuant to the compact or through the data system, when certified by the commission or an agent thereof, shall constitute the authenticated business records of the commission and be entitled to any associated hearsay exception in any relevant judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative proceedings in a member state.

(e) Current significant investigative information pertaining to a licensee in any member state shall only be available to other member states. It shall be the responsibility of the member states to report any adverse action against a licensee and to monitor the database to determine whether adverse action has been taken against a licensee. Adverse action information pertaining to a licensee in any member state shall be available to any other member state.

(f) A member state contributing information to the data system may designate information that shall not be shared with the public without the express permission of the contributing state.

(g) Any information submitted to the data system that is subsequently expunged pursuant to federal law or the laws of the member state contributing the information shall be removed from the data system.

SECTION 12. RULEMAKING

(a) The commission shall promulgate reasonable rules to effectively and efficiently implement and administer the purposes and provisions of the compact. A rule shall be invalid and have no force or effect only if a court of competent jurisdiction holds that the rule is invalid because the commission exercised its rulemaking authority in a manner that is beyond the scope and purposes of the compact, or the powers granted hereunder, or based upon another applicable standard of review.

(b) The rules of the commission shall have the force of law in each member state, provided that where the rules of the commission conflict with the laws of the member state that establish the member state's laws, regulations and applicable standards that govern the practice of social work as held by a court of competent jurisdiction, the rules of the commission shall be ineffective in such state to the extent of the conflict.

(c) The commission shall exercise its rulemaking powers pursuant to

the criteria set forth in this section of the compact and the rules adopted thereunder. A rule shall become binding on the day following adoption or the date specified in the rule or amendment, whichever is later.

(d) If a majority of the legislatures of the member states rejects a rule or portion of a rule, by enactment of a statute or resolution in the same manner used to adopt the compact not later than four years after the date of adoption of the rule, such rule shall have no further force and effect in any member state.

(e) Rules shall be adopted at a regular or special meeting of the commission.

(f) Prior to adoption of a proposed rule, the commission shall hold a public hearing and allow persons to provide oral and written comments, data, facts, opinions and arguments.

(g) Prior to adoption of a proposed rule by the commission, and at least thirty days in advance of the meeting at which the commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed rule, the commission shall provide a notice of proposed rulemaking:

(1) On the Internet web site of the commission or other publicly accessible platform;

(2) To persons who have requested notice of the commission's notices of proposed rulemaking; and

(3) In such other way as the commission may by rule specify.

(h) The notice of proposed rulemaking shall include:

(1) The time, date and location of the public hearing at which the commission will hear public comments on the proposed rule and, if different, the time, date and location of the meeting where the commission will consider and vote on the proposed rule;

(2) If the hearing is held via telecommunication, video conference or other electronic means, the commission shall include the mechanism for access to the hearing in the notice of proposed rulemaking;

(3) The text of the proposed rule and the reason therefor;

(4) A request for comments on the proposed rule from any interested person; and

(5) The manner in which interested persons may submit written comments.

(i) All hearings shall be recorded. A copy of the recording and all written comments and documents received by the commission in response to the proposed rule shall be available to the public.

(j) Nothing in this section of the compact shall be construed as requiring a separate hearing on each rule. Rules may be grouped for the convenience of the commission at hearings required by this section of the compact.

(k) The commission shall, by majority vote of all members, take final action on the proposed rule based on the rulemaking record and the full text of the rule.

(1) The commission may adopt changes to the proposed rule provided the changes do not enlarge the original purpose of the proposed rule.

(2) The commission shall provide an explanation of the reasons for substantive changes made to the proposed rule as well as reasons for substantive changes not made that were recommended by commenters.

(3) The commission shall determine a reasonable effective date for the rule. Except for an emergency as provided in subsection (l) of this section of the compact, the effective date of the rule shall be no sooner

than thirty days after issuing the notice that it adopted or amended the rule.

(l) Upon determination that an emergency exists, the commission may consider and adopt an emergency rule with forty-eight hours' notice, with opportunity to comment, provided the usual rulemaking procedures provided in the compact and in this section of the compact shall be retroactively applied to the rule as soon as reasonably possible, but in no event later than ninety days after the effective date of the rule. For the purposes of this subsection, an emergency rule is one that shall be adopted immediately to:

(1) Meet an imminent threat to public health, safety or welfare;

(2) Prevent a loss of commission or member state funds;

(3) Meet a deadline for the promulgation of a rule that is established by federal law or rule; or

(4) Protect public health and safety.

(m) The commission or an authorized committee of the commission may direct revisions to a previously adopted rule for purposes of correcting typographical errors, errors in format, errors in consistency or grammatical errors. Public notice of any revisions shall be posted on the Internet web site of the commission. The revision shall be subject to challenge by any person for a period of thirty days after posting. The revision may be challenged only on grounds that the revision results in a material change to a rule. A challenge shall be made in writing and delivered to the commission prior to the end of the notice period. If no challenge is made, the revision shall take effect without further action. If the revision is challenged, the revision may not take effect without the approval of the commission.

(n) No member state's rulemaking requirements shall apply under

the compact.

SECTION 13. OVERSIGHT, DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND ENFORCEMENT

(a) Oversight:

(1) The executive and judicial branches of state government in each member state shall enforce the compact and take all actions necessary and appropriate to implement the compact.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in the compact, venue is proper and judicial proceedings by or against the commission shall be brought solely and exclusively in a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the commission is located. The commission may waive venue and jurisdictional defenses to the extent it adopts or consents to participate in alternative dispute resolution proceedings. Nothing in this subdivision shall affect or limit the selection or propriety of venue in any action against a licensee for professional malpractice, misconduct or any such similar matter.

(3) The commission shall be entitled to receive service of process in any proceeding regarding the enforcement or interpretation of the compact and shall have standing to intervene in such a proceeding for all purposes. Failure to provide the commission service of process shall render a judgment or order void as to the commission, the compact or promulgated rules.

(b) Default, technical assistance and termination:

(1) If the commission determines that a member state has defaulted in the performance of its obligations or responsibilities under the compact or the promulgated rules, the commission shall provide written notice to the defaulting state. The notice of default shall describe the default, the proposed means of curing the default and any other

action that the commission may take, and offer training and specific technical assistance regarding the default.

(2) The commission shall provide a copy of the notice of default to the other member states.

(c) If a state in default fails to cure the default, the defaulting state may be terminated from the compact upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates of the member states, and all rights, privileges and benefits conferred on such state by the compact may be terminated on the effective date of termination. A cure of the default does not relieve the offending state of obligations or liabilities incurred during the period of default.

(d) Termination of membership in the compact shall be imposed only after all other means of securing compliance have been exhausted. Notice of intent to suspend or terminate shall be given by the commission to the governor, the majority and minority leaders of the defaulting state's legislature, the defaulting state's state licensing authority and each of the member states' state licensing authority.

(e) A state that has been terminated from membership in the compact is responsible for all assessments, obligations and liabilities incurred through the effective date of termination, including obligations that extend beyond the effective date of termination.

(f) Upon the termination of a state's membership from the compact, such state shall immediately provide notice to all licensees within such state of such termination. The terminated state shall continue to recognize all licenses granted pursuant to the compact for a minimum of six months after the date of said notice of termination.

(g) The commission shall not bear any costs related to a state that is found to be in default or that has been terminated from the compact, unless agreed upon in writing between the commission and the

defaulting state.

(h) The defaulting state may appeal the action of the commission by petitioning the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the federal district where the commission has its principal offices. The prevailing party shall be awarded all costs of such litigation, including reasonable attorney's fees.

(i) Dispute resolution:

(1) Upon request by a member state, the commission shall attempt to resolve disputes related to the compact that arise among member states and between member and nonmember states.

(2) The commission shall promulgate a rule providing for both mediation and binding dispute resolution for disputes as appropriate.

(j) Enforcement:

(1) By majority vote as provided by rule, the commission may initiate legal action against a member state in default in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the federal district where the commission has its principal offices to enforce compliance with the provisions of the compact and its promulgated rules. The relief sought may include both injunctive relief and damages. If judicial enforcement is necessary, the prevailing party shall be awarded all costs of such litigation, including reasonable attorney's fees. The remedies in this subdivision shall not be the exclusive remedies of the commission. The commission may pursue any other remedies available under federal or the defaulting member state's law.

(2) A member state may initiate legal action against the commission in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the federal district where the commission has its principal offices to enforce compliance with the provisions of the compact and its promulgated

rules. The relief sought may include both injunctive relief and damages. In the event judicial enforcement is necessary, the prevailing party shall be awarded all costs of such litigation, including reasonable attorney's fees.

(3) No person other than a member state shall enforce the compact against the commission.

SECTION 14. EFFECTIVE DATE, WITHDRAWAL AND AMENDMENT

(a) The compact shall come into effect on the date on which the compact statute is enacted into law in the seventh member state.

(1) On or after the effective date of the compact, the commission shall convene and review the enactment of each of the charter member states to determine if the statute enacted by each such charter member state is materially different than the model compact statute.

(A) A charter member state whose enactment is found to be materially different from the model compact statute shall be entitled to the default process set forth in section 13 of the compact.

(B) If any member state is later found to be in default, or is terminated or withdraws from the compact, the commission shall remain in existence and the compact shall remain in effect even if the number of member states is less than seven.

(2) Member states enacting the compact subsequent to the charter member states shall be subject to the process set forth in subdivision (21) of subsection (c) of section 10 of the compact to determine if their enactments are materially different from the model compact statute and whether they qualify for participation in the compact.

(3) All actions taken for the benefit of the commission or in

furtherance of the purposes of the administration of the compact prior to the effective date of the compact or the commission coming into existence shall be considered to be actions of the commission unless specifically repudiated by the commission.

(4) Any state that joins the compact subsequent to the commission's initial adoption of the rules and bylaws shall be subject to the rules and bylaws as they exist on the date on which the compact becomes law in such state. Any rule that has been previously adopted by the commission shall have the full force and effect of law on the day the compact becomes law in such state.

(b) Any member state may withdraw from the compact by enacting a statute repealing the same.

(1) A member state's withdrawal shall not take effect until one hundred eighty days after enactment of the repealing statute.

(2) Withdrawal shall not affect the continuing requirement of the withdrawing state's licensing authority to comply with the investigative and adverse action reporting requirements of the compact prior to the effective date of withdrawal.

(3) Upon the enactment of a statute withdrawing from the compact, a withdrawing state shall immediately provide notice of such withdrawal to all licensees within such state. Notwithstanding any subsequent statutory enactment to the contrary, such withdrawing state shall continue to recognize all licenses granted pursuant to the compact for a minimum of one hundred eighty days after the date of such notice of withdrawal.

(c) Nothing contained in the compact shall be construed to invalidate or prevent any licensure agreement or other cooperative arrangement between a member state and a nonmember state that does not conflict with the provisions of the compact.

(d) The compact may be amended by the member states. No amendment to the compact shall become effective and binding upon any member state until it is enacted into the laws of all member states.

SECTION 15. CONSTRUCTION AND SEVERABILITY

(a) The compact and the commission's rulemaking authority shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate the purposes, implementation and administration of the compact. Provisions of the compact expressly authorizing or requiring the promulgation of rules shall not be construed to limit the commission's rulemaking authority solely for such purposes.

(b) The provisions of the compact shall be severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of the compact is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to the constitution of any member state, a state seeking participation in the compact or the United States, or the applicability thereof to any government, agency, person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the compact and the applicability thereof to any other government, agency, person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section of the compact, the commission may deny a state's participation in the compact or, in accordance with the requirements of subsection (b) of section 13 of the compact, terminate a member state's participation in the compact, if it determines that a constitutional requirement of a member state is a material departure from the compact. If the compact is held to be contrary to the constitution of any member state, the compact shall remain in full force and effect as to the remaining member states and in full force and effect as to the member state affected as to all severable matters.

SECTION 16. CONSISTENT EFFECT AND CONFLICT WITH OTHER STATE LAWS

(a) A licensee providing services in a remote state under a multistate authorization to practice shall adhere to the laws and regulations, including applicable standards, of the remote state where the client is located at the time care is rendered.

(b) Nothing in this section of the compact shall be construed to prevent or inhibit the enforcement of any other law of a member state that is not inconsistent with the compact.

(c) Any laws, statutes, regulations or other legal requirements in a member state in conflict with the compact are superseded to the extent of the conflict.

(d) All permissible agreements between the commission and the member states are binding in accordance with the terms of such agreements.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Public Health shall require each person applying for licensure as a social worker to submit to a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history records check pursuant to section 29-17a of the general statutes. For the purposes of this section, (1) "social worker" means an individual licensed for the independent practice of social work, and (2) "licensure" means authorization by a state social worker regulatory authority to engage in the independent practice of social work, the practice of which would be unlawful without such authorization.

Approved May 21, 2024