

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair's Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

My name is Evelyn McLean, and I'm a current social work student, getting my MSW at Portland State University. I am delighted to write this testimony in support of HB 4071-1. I have been watching the interstate compact movement for several years, and I believe it is part of modernizing the licensure process, making mental health care more accessible to all Oregonians, and making social work licensure more flexible and attractive for people considering a career in social work.

In 2020 I spent a great deal of time considering whether to go back to graduate school to start a career in mental health, and the portability and flexibility of my license was a significant factor in this decision. I ended up deciding to get an MSW in hopes that the interstate compact would come together before I had graduated. I believe that many other potential counselors and social workers would benefit from the sense of security that the long years invested in education and licensure would allow them to practice in other states if they ever needed to move.

I believe that this bill could also have a significant impact on helping more Oregonians get access to mental health care. Currently our health care workforce is limited to whoever is currently available and practicing in our state, which means that qualified therapists and social workers in states with more capacity in their mental health workforce can't step in to help support people in need. I believe this bill has the power to eliminate this unnecessary bureaucratic barrier, and help people access help in a time when our institutions in Oregon are flooded.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Evelyn McLean

Portland State University, MSW Expected June 2025