

Committee Members for Marriage and Family Therapists

Bill: H7064

Position: Proponent

Dear Members of the Committee,

I appreciate you taking the time to allow me to offer my support for updates to the Rhode Island Marriage and Family Therapist Bill.

I earned my MSc in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) in 2023 at the University of Rhode Island. Despite living and studying in Rhode Island, I was incentivized to work and get licensed in Massachusetts due to the disparity in licensure between the states. I want to stay and work in Rhode Island though current licensure disparities make it hard to compete with Massachusetts and Connecticut's offerings.

We would like our requirements for licensure to be in line with the national landscape and particularly favorable regionally. The licensure requirements we are proposing are right in between MA and CT. The requirements are designed to make it favorable for clinicians from Rhode Island to want to stay and work in Rhode Island. It closes any loopholes the licensure reciprocity may cause for clinicians wanting to circumvent the requirements and transfer back into our state. We need clinicians to stay in our state to serve the mental health needs of our state as some of our regions have workforce shortages.

While we are asking to lower the hours of training for full licensure for regional and national parity, we are adding a requirement that a portion of the hours be training specifically with couples and families as that is the license we will receive. This will provide a level of quality control for our profession.

Regional parity is good for care of clients as we are the smallest state and have lots of situations where people would benefit from seeking care over the border either due to a specialty they are seeking or having work or family in both states. Removing barriers to dual licensure just makes sense in the digital age. Mental health counselors already have this reciprocity in RI.

As a state, we have always prided ourselves on being at the forefront of issues. And supporting this bill will allow us to continue to demonstrate that commitment.

Respectfully yours,

Glenn Ricci

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