

March 29, 2026

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Gina Maclure. I am a South Kingstown resident, a faculty and staff member and clinical supervisor at the University of Rhode Island, and a business owner as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice serving Rhode Island patients. I am writing in strong support of **Senate Bill 3026**.

I am a faculty and staff member in the URI Couple and Family Therapy Program, the only program in Rhode Island that trains and graduates Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs). A primary goal of our program is to retain highly trained graduates within the state so they can meet Rhode Island's mental health needs. MFTs provide specialized, systems-based care and are a critical resource for individuals, couples, and families—particularly at a time when several regions of the state, including Washington and Newport Counties, are experiencing clinician shortages.

To retain graduates successfully, Rhode Island must remain competitive both regionally and nationally. Currently, Rhode Island's licensure requirements for MFTs are among the most stringent in the country. The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy has identified Rhode Island as having one of the highest direct client contact hour requirements nationwide and has advised that lowering these requirements would align the state with national standards and improve competitiveness. Without these adjustments, Rhode Island risks becoming an outlier that prospective clinicians bypass in favor of states with more attainable licensure pathways.

This concern is not theoretical. Since 2012, part of my role has involved tracking graduate employment outcomes for accreditation purposes. Over that time, I have consistently observed graduates leaving Rhode Island to work in Connecticut when licensure conditions there are more favorable. **Senate Bill 3026** would place Rhode Island's requirements squarely between those of Connecticut and Massachusetts, making the state more attractive for graduates to remain and practice here. Importantly, the bill also closes potential reciprocity loopholes that could allow clinicians to circumvent Rhode Island standards by obtaining licensure elsewhere and then transferring back into the state.

Senate Bill 3026 maintains important safeguards. While it lowers the total number of hours required for licensure to achieve regional and national parity, it preserves a minimum two-year period of supervised training. In addition, it introduces a requirement that a portion of supervised hours specifically involve work with couples and families, ensuring alignment with the Marriage and Family Therapy scope of practice and maintaining quality of care. The bill also supports part-time clinicians, who may currently take more than four

years to complete the existing 2,000-hour requirement, without compromising supervision or professional standards.

Finally, improved regional reciprocity benefits clients as well as clinicians. Rhode Island's small geographic size means many residents live, work, and seek care across state lines. Reducing barriers to dual licensure supports continuity of care, reflects the realities of modern and virtual mental health service delivery, and increases access and choice for clients. Mental health counselors already benefit from a licensure compact in Rhode Island, and extending similar flexibility to Marriage and Family Therapists is both fair and logical.

For these reasons, I strongly urge your support of **Senate Bill 3026**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina Maclure". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gina Maclure, MS, LMFT
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
AAMFT Approved Supervisor
URI Couple and Family Therapy Clinic Coordinator and Internship Director
Past President, Rhode Island Association of Marriage and Family Therapy