



April 24, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey
Representative Anne Perry
Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Maine State Legislature
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1494 - An Act Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Richard A. Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Maine and serve as the President & CEO for VOA Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. I wish to offer this letter as my written testimony in support of LD 1494 to grant a 90-day provisional license to mental health counseling professionals who are licensed in other states upon application for licensure in Maine.

Volunteers of America (VOA) Northern New England is a faith-based community nonprofit that works with households experiencing deep poverty, disabilities, and homelessness. Our organization provides residential treatment in high quality community homes in Cumberland, Hancock, Penobscot, Waldo, and York counties. Like many other behavioral health community programs, the quality of care and engagement of our program participants is directly related to the professional staff we are able to recruit and retain. Unfortunately, our organization has experienced significant delays and barriers to supporting an out-of-state professional in obtaining her license in Maine.

VOA offered a position to a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) from New York. (For sake of confidentiality, I will refer to this employee as 'Maria' throughout this written testimony.) Maria applied to become a Regional Clinician for VOA's Northern Mental Health Programs in August 2022. She was relocating from New York to Maine and was fully licensed as an LCPC. Maria passed both the national exam and her state exam in New York before applying in Maine. As part of the interview process, Maria checked with the Board of Counseling Professionals Licensure in Maine and was told that it would not be a problem to transfer her license to Maine and that it was a relatively quick process. She started with VOA in November 2022 with an agreement that her license would be transferred from New York to Maine within 30 days of hire.

However, Maria discovered that it was not a quick process and her application for Maine State licensure was not granted until February, 2023. She encountered significant lags in communication and mixed messages. The Board accepted her application materials then kept asking for additional or duplicate information even after they deposited her fee. Eventually, VOA's Mental Health Director had to seek outside support from other advocates to help push for completion of the licensure process.

This three-month delay impacted our community services. Maria could not perform the full responsibilities of her job without the license, and we had to take additional steps to get her MHRT-1P certified to fill certification gaps so she could work directly with clients. Additionally, this caused Maria significant anxiety and worries regarding her professional status and her ability to remain in Maine after a costly relocation. For Maria, the ability to receive a provisional license upon application (based on her previous good standing and license in another state) would have allowed us to serve program participants immediately and created a much more welcoming process for Maria to Maine.

I would ask you to give this bill serious consideration and your approval. Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Hooks Wayman
President & CEO
VOA Northern New England
14 Maine Street, Suite 100
Brunswick, ME 04011
www.voanne.org
207-373-1140