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Testimony of Representative Kristi Mathieson presenting

LD 416, An Act to Enact the Dietitian Licensure Compact

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage Insurance and Financial

Good morning, Senator Bailey and esteemed colleagues on the Health Coverage Insurance and Financial Services Committee. I am Representative Kristi Mathieson representing House District 151, Kittery. Thank you for your time today. It is my honor to present to you **LD 416, An Act to Enact the Dietitian Licensure Compact**.

Maine has currently passed nine compacts, including Speech-Language Pathology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistants, Dentist and Dental Hygienists, Social Work, Physicians, Nursing and Clinical Counseling.¹ The most well known example of a successful interstate compact, that most all of us benefit from, is the Driver License Compact.

The Dietitian Licensure Compact, as proposed in LD 416, is an agreement designed to allow licensed dietitians to practice across state lines without requiring multiple licenses. This compact was created through a collaborative agreement between the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (ADA), the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Counsel of State Governments (CSG) National Center for Interstate Licensure Compacts. Due to the nature of the profession, military families are frequently asked to transfer locations to best serve the security needs of our country. As a result, 21% of military spouses face unemployment with 36% of spouses requiring some form of occupational license for employment. In 2019, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92, Section 575) the DOD entered into a cooperative agreement with CSG to provide grants to occupations to develop occupational licensure compacts.

The Dietitian Licensure Compact in LD 416 works to reduce administrative burden, expand access to nutrition care, support our military families and support health care workforce development. In order for a state to participate in the compact the state must currently license and regulate the practice of dietetics and have a mechanism in place for receiving and

¹<https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/status-tracker/military-spouse-employment-and-economic-opportunities>

investigating complaints about licensees. The member state requires a dietitian who wants to hold compact privilege to obtain or retain a license in the licensee's home state and meet the home state's (primary state of residence) qualifications for licensure, as well as all other applicable state laws. This home state can change if a provider moves but the compact requires them to obtain a new home state license with applicable state fees associated. The exception to this application to change the home state is for active military members or their spouse. They can designate a home state where they have a current license in good standing and retain this home state designation during active duty. Nothing in this compact requires providers to hold the compact privilege in their home state, nothing in the compact interferes with a single state license and only home states have the power under this compact to take adverse action against the licensee's home state licence.

To exercise the compact privilege the licensee has to be either a valid registered dietitian (RD) or have completed an accredited master's or doctoral degree with at least 1000 hours of practice experience under a RD or a licensed dietitian (LD), have successfully completed either the RD exam or an approved national credentialing examination, and hold an unencumbered license in their home state.

All licensees exercising compact privilege have to adhere to the laws and regulations of their home and remote state and are responsible for educating themselves on and complying with any and all state laws relating to the practice of dietetics in their home and remote state. This required knowledge is no different than current requirements. I am licensed in both Maine and New Hampshire and have to familiarize myself with all state laws around my licence in both states.

I greatly appreciate the collaboration between the ADA, DOD and CSG on this particular compact. I believe they struck a healthy balance between maintaining uniform licensure standards, upholding high professional and ethical expectations across all participating states, and minimizing the need for additional licensing - this is no small feat.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to try to answer any questions. Please note there are those behind me, for example Rebecca MacLean who represents the Maine Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, who are also valuable resources for any of your questions.