

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5137

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to establish a grant program to be known as the Mental Health Licensure Portability Program to award grants to eligible entities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2026

Mr. KING introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to establish a grant program to be known as the Mental Health Licensure Portability Program to award grants to eligible entities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Compacts, Access, and
5 Responsible Expansion for Mental Health Professionals
6 Act” or the “CARE for Mental Health Professionals Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE PORTABILITY PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 Health and Human Services, acting through the Adminis-
6 trator, shall establish a grant program to be known as the
7 Mental Health Licensure Portability Program to award
8 grants to eligible entities for projects to—

9 (1) incentivize counselors to practice in States
10 that have entered into interstate compacts for the
11 purpose of expanding the workforce of credentialed
12 mental health professionals; and

13 (2) develop, operate, or maintain interstate
14 compact commissions authorized to effectuate the
15 provisions of interstate compacts entered into by
16 such States.

17 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

18 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
19 trator” means the Administrator of the Health Re-
20 sources and Services Administration.

21 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “commission”
22 means a joint interstate governmental agency com-
23 prised of States that have entered into an interstate
24 compact for the purpose of implementing, facili-
25 tating, and effectuating provisions of such interstate
26 compact.

1 (3) COUNSELOR.—The term “counselor” means
2 a licensed professional that is trained to give guid-
3 ance to individuals, families, and groups with respect
4 to personal, social, or psychological problems.

5 (4) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
6 ty” means a professional, psychiatric, psychological,
7 social work, or pediatric counseling interstate com-
8 pact commission or licensure board of a State that
9 is participating in an occupational licensure inter-
10 state compact.

11 (5) INTERSTATE COMPACT.—The term “com-
12 pact” means an occupational licensure agreement
13 enacted by 2 or more States that is based on the
14 mutual recognition of professional qualifications
15 through criteria stipulated in such agreement, in
16 which a State agrees to recognize the issuance of a
17 license by another State to a counselor, psychiatrist,
18 psychologist, or pediatric mental health professional.

19 (6) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-
20 ing given the term in section 6501 of title 31,
21 United States Code.

22 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act
24 \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2030.

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