November 14, 2020

Honorable Karen Spilka, President of the Senate
Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov
24 Beacon Street Room 332
Boston, MA, 02133

Re: Amendments #52 and #301 Nurse Licensure Compact Study to S. 4, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means recommended Fiscal Year 2021 State Budget.

Dear President Spilka:

The American Nurses Association Massachusetts, which is the only voluntary professional nursing association representing all Registered Nurses across the Commonwealth, strongly supports Amendments #52 and #301 Nurse Licensure Compact Study to the proposed FY 2021 Senate Appropriations bill. Pursuing a clear and unbiased analysis as proposed in this amendment will, we believe, provide the evidence necessary to support the adoption of the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) in Massachusetts.

As you may know, The Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) is an agreement between states that allows nurses to have one license but the ability to practice in other states that are part of the agreement. Implemented by standard legislation in participating states, the compact facilitates license portability by allowing a compact-licensed nurse to practice lawfully in all other states party to the same compact.

The benefit to the nursing workforce of compact participation is large and singular: Interstate portability. The removal of the licensure barrier to practice in Compact States carries particular benefits for traveling nurses and military spouses, as well as in cases of disaster, or other surges in demand for nurse inflow. Compact licensing also facilitates e-health and telehealth access, thereby improving continuity of care. Thirty-four states, including Maine and NH, currently participate in the eNLC. Compact States work together in establishing rules for licensure and in protecting public safety. It is time Massachusetts was at that table.

Related to both quality of care and workforce quality are the uniform licensure requirements for a multistate license holder. The licensing standards under the NLC are more stringent than Massachusetts’ current standards. To obtain a Compact/multistate license, a nurse must meet their home state’s qualification for licensure and must submit to a national county criminal background check (state and federal fingerprint-based criminal background check) which includes arrest as well as court/conviction information, have no state or federal felony convictions and have no misdemeanor convictions related to the practice of nursing.¹

One survey of more than 3,000 RN’s found that 68% of all respondents favored national licensure; that number increases to 77% amongst the millennial nursing workforce.² Nurses’ support for national...
licensure is a reflection of the nursing shortage and competitive job market, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and need for a mobile and responsive workforce in highly desirable specialty areas such as the ER.

A more highly educated workforce has been shown to decrease patient mortality and improve nursing quality indicators.\(^3\) RN to BSN degree programs are the largest proportion of all educational programs nationally; with 777 available nationwide, of which more than 600 are offered at least partially online.\(^4\) The eNLC facilitates online nursing education by reducing educators’ need for multiple licenses and may improve efforts to hire and recruit faculty.

It is crucial that this amendment pass NOW! Massachusetts legislators and the nursing community at large needs the impartial analysis which will be generated by the Health Policy Commission in order to carefully consider adopting the Compact in the upcoming legislative session.

ANA Massachusetts promotes and advances the health, well-being and safety of all citizens of the Commonwealth. We believe that passing Amendment 52/301 Nurse Licensure Compact Study will provide clear evidence that participation in the eNLC will improve the quality of care received by the citizens of the commonwealth and protect the public safety. A reduction in interstate licensing barriers has the potential to encourage more nurses to practice in Massachusetts and may reduce the number of nursing position vacancies and faculty vacancies.

On behalf of all of the registered nurses from the bedside to the community to the boardroom, thank you for your time and attention. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Julie Cronin, DNP, RN, OCN
President
American Nurses Association Massachusetts, Inc.

Carmela A. Townsend, DNP, MS.MBA, RN
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Cindy Friedman, Chairperson, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing,
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Honorable Bruce E. Tarr, Bruce.Tarr@masenate.gov
Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chairperson, Senate Committee on Ways and Means,
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1 https://nurse.org/articles/enhanced-compact-multi-state-license-eNLC/
2 https://www.amnhealthcare.com/industry-research/survey/2017-rn-survey/
3 https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Impact-of-Education
4 https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Degree-Completion-Programs