



# ROB STAFSHOLT

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TO: Senate Committee on Health  
FROM: Senator Rob Stafsholt  
DATE: September 27, 2023  
SUBJECT: Testimony in Favor of Senate Bills 196, 197, 391 & 400

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Thank you, Chairwoman Cabral-Guevara and members of the Senate Committee on Health, for allowing me to testify in favor of Senate Bills 196, 197, 391 and 400.

Over the last few years, I have heard from many frustrated constituents that are dealing with unnecessary delays, confusion and lack of communication while attempting to get an occupational license from the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). These unnecessary delays cause individuals to have to postpone starting their careers or stops them from entering the workforce. Wisconsin's healthcare and business sectors are struggling to find qualified workers so we need to ensure our licensure process is streamlined and functions efficiently. We cannot afford to fall behind other states in attracting skilled individuals to live and work in our state.

In response, leadership created the Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses, and I was honored to be appointed as Chair. The study committee was created with the goal of finding solutions so current and future license holders can be licensed in a timely manner. The committee was made up of two Republican and two Democratic legislators as well as five members of the public.

Through our conversations with licensed professionals, research and policy groups, and DSPS, our study committee focused our bill recommendations on three primary issue areas: data tracking, workload simplification, and reciprocal credentialing. The following bills being heard today fall under the third issue area of reciprocal credentialing:

- Senate Bill 196 relating to ratification of the Counseling Compact.
- Senate Bill 197 relating to ratification of the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact.
- Senate Bill 391 relating to ratification of the Social Work Licensure Compact.
- Senate Bill 400 relating to ratification of the PA Licensure Compact

Senate Bill 196 and 197 are both interstate compacts that the study committee members broadly supported and recommended them for introduction. Senate Bills 391 and 400 are also interstate compacts that we didn't have enough time to discuss before our final hearing.

Interstate compacts allow states to create an agreement and implement standards for occupational licensing of specific professions. These compacts would allow professional, licensed individuals residing in a compact member state to practice in other member states without the need for multiple licenses. Compacts provide a clear pathway for professionals to move seamlessly from one state to another through an agreement among states to recognize another state's occupational license.

Wisconsin has recently enacted legislation allowing our state to participate in a number of interstate compacts including the Physical Therapy Compact, the Occupational Therapy Compact, the Enhanced Nurse Licensing Compact (eNLC), and others.

Thank you, members. I ask for your support and would be happy to answer any questions.



**SB 196 Legislative Testimony (Information Only)  
Wisconsin Senate Health Committee**

**September 27, 2023**

Chair Cabral-Guevara and Senate Health Committee Members:

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is a nonpartisan membership organization that serves the three branches of state governments. The CSG National Center for Interstate Compacts is a technical assistance provider for states on interstate compacts. CSG has provided technical assistance to states during the development, legislative consideration, and administration of the Counseling Compact.

The Counseling Compact is an interstate compact, or a contract among states, allowing professional counselors licensed in a compact member state to practice in other compact member states without the need for multiple licenses. Like other interstate licensure compacts, the Counseling Compact is designed to improve access to services, enhance mobility for practitioners, support relocating military spouses, improve continuity of care, and ensure cooperation among compact member states.

The Counseling Compact reflects how states license professional counselors. For example, to participate in the compact, a state must require their licensees to pass a nationally recognized exam, obtain a 60 semester-hour master's degree in counseling (or in the graduate course work defined in the compact), and complete a supervised postgraduate professional experience.

Licensed professional counselors who meet the uniform requirements are permitted to obtain a privilege to practice, which is the legal authorization to practice in another compact member state. Compact member states retain control over scope of practice and licensure requirements.

The compact creates a shared interstate licensure data system which facilitates the application and granting of a privilege to practice. The data system also enhances public protection by ensuring that member states share investigative and disciplinary information with one another.

The Counseling Compact currently has 30 member states and is in the process of becoming operational. The compact commission inaugurally convened in October of 2022 and has since then developed bylaws, elected officers, adopted a budget, and is in the process of developing the compact data system. Once the data system is



operational, eligible practitioners may apply for a privilege to practice.

Wisconsin is currently a member of five licensure compacts, including the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, Nurse Licensure Compact, Occupational Therapy Compact, Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact and Physical Therapy Compact.

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver informational testimony for the committee. CSG is available to assist with any questions regarding the Counseling Compact or interstate compact policy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Sims', is positioned above the typed name.

Carl Sims  
Deputy Program Director  
National Center for Interstate Compacts  
The Council of State Governments