

Neutral Testimony
ND State Board of Psychologist Examiners
Senate Bill No. 2205
Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senator Michael Wobbema, Chair
February 10, 2023 - 11:00 am

Chairman Wobbema, members of the Workforce Development Committee, I am Dr. Paul Kolstoe representing the Board of Psychologist Examiners. I am a Psychologist, licensed under Chapter 43-32 of the ND Century Code. The Board asked that I appear today to make clear we are highly aware of the PsyPact bill you are considering and to make clear that, while we see our role to have a neutral stance while you set policy, we are prepared to implement the interstate compact should you pass it.

I will be brief as others can speak to the advantages and disadvantages. The Board has attended conferences with specific training on this interjurisdictional compact and are very aware of the provisions. The Board voted to take a Neutral position on SB 2205. The specific reason is that members felt the Compact decision was a policy decision reserved to the legislative process, and the Board felt obliged to respect that. We understand our role in the legislative process is to advise on the procedural mechanisms of regulation and leave overall policy to you.

Some simple data from the Covid experience was that there were 83 psychologist applications to the Department of Health during the governor's proclamation suspending various types of licensing for interstate practice. Of those psychologists, 66 were approved and 17 were not. Of these psychologists, the North Dakota State Board of Psychologist Examiners was not involved in any of the information or decision making.

The Compact required 7 states to adopt it before it would become active, and it has been operational since April 2019. PsyPact now includes 35 states with more currently considering adoption, including North Dakota.

If passed, obligations of the Board will be to select a commissioner to represent the Board on the PsyPact Commission, which involves at least one annual meeting. In addition, the PsyPact Commission operating costs are offset by PsyPact registration revenue of those using the system and an annual assessment of each member state. This is estimated to be around \$7,000 to \$10,000 annually, which is currently within the means of the Board without causing any imminent increase in licensing fees.

PsyPact provides a system to track interstate practitioners and a method for handling complaints across jurisdictional lines. If PsyPact is not adopted in this session, it would be advisable to develop such a mechanism for regulatory boards across disciplines should another governor's emergency proclamation like this be required again.

I would be happy to answer any questions.