

Testimony in Opposition to the Dietitian Licensure Compact (HB 2070)
Chairman Senator Beverly Gossage
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

SUBJECT: Vote No on HB 2070, Dietitian Licensure Compact

February 19, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare,

As a licensed dietitian in Kansas, I strongly oppose the Dietitian Licensure Compact (HB 2070) due to its failure to require verification of U.S. citizenship, lawful permanent residency, or work authorization before granting licensure. The current language creates a loophole that undermines federal employment laws, threatens workforce protections for U.S. dietitians, and compromises public health and safety.

1. The Compact Creates a Legal Loophole Allowing Licensure Without Work Authorization

Section 4(A)(1)(b) of the Compact allows foreign-trained dietitians from ACEND-accredited programs (or other accreditors) to obtain licensure but does not mandate verification of legal work status. This provision directly conflicts with:

- 8 U.S.C. § 1324a (Immigration Reform and Control Act - IRCA), which prohibits hiring individuals without proper work authorization.
- Kansas' professional licensing laws, which historically align with federal employment eligibility requirements.

By granting licensure without ensuring legal work status, the Compact implies employment eligibility where none exists, increasing the risk of unauthorized employment and employer liability under federal law.

Comparison with Other Licensure Compacts:

- Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) and Physical Therapy Compact (PTC) require work authorization verification.
- Dietitians should not be held to a lower standard when their practice involves medical nutrition therapy, and patient care.

2. Workforce Displacement: The Compact Puts U.S. Dietitians at a Disadvantage

HB 2070 allows foreign-trained individuals to obtain licensure without work authorization; this Compact will artificially inflate the number of credentialed professionals competing for Kansas-based jobs, creates confusion for employers increasing the risk of hiring unauthorized individuals and facing penalties, and disrupts fair job competition for legally authorized U.S. dietitians.

Moreover, the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (AND) and ACEND (its accreditation arm) have expanded foreign program accreditation to facilitate more international candidates entering

U.S. dietetic internships and licensure pathways. Under HB 2070, this Compact benefits ACEND's institutional goals - not Kansas dietitians. It prioritizes credentialing over employment law compliance and sets a dangerous precedent of licensure policy being shaped by trade associations instead of workforce and public interest needs.

Vote No on HB 2070, Dietitian Licensure Compact in Its Current Form

Kansas must uphold workforce protections, employment laws, and public safety by requiring lawful work authorization for Kansas Dietitian licensure. I urge the Legislature to:

- **Amend the Compact to require U.S. citizenship or legal work authorization verification (aligning it with federal law and other healthcare compacts).**
- **Reject any Compact language that allows licensure without ensuring work eligibility.**
- **Maintain Kansas' control over state licensure instead of yielding authority to a Compact with loopholes that weaken regulatory standards.**

This Dietitian Licensure Compact (HB 2070), as currently written, is a direct threat to Kansas' professional workforce, regulatory integrity, and public safety. I strongly urge you to vote against its adoption until these critical issues are addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KD' followed by a stylized flourish.

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Licensed Dietitian, Kansas