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SUSAN RUIZ
23RD DISTRICT

March 15, 2023

To: Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee

From: Rep Susan Ruiz

RE: HB2340 Proponent

Chairwoman Gossage, Vice Chair Erickson, Ranking Member Petty and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss as a proponent to HB 2340.

We are all aware of the social work workforce shortage. HB2340 is a step toward adding flexibility within the licensure process and is an effort to keep social work students from leaving the state for employment opportunities in the surrounding states.

Kansas schools of social work, graduates over 500 social worker a year and according to the National Association of Social Workers, Kansas Chapter, only about 20% of those graduates are becoming licensed. There are 1,141 social workers at the highest level of SW licensure (LSCSW) in Kansas. Thirty-nine percent of those social workers are over the age of 55. Only 69 of these social workers work in the rural/frontier areas of Kansas.

Additionally, HB2340 is a step toward the legislature authoring the Social Work Licensure Compact. Interstate compacts are legislatively enacted and are legally binding agreements among states. The compact will enable regulated social workers with bachelor's, master's and clinical licenses to service clients in every state that joins the compact, rather than going through the licensure process in every state where they need to practice.

Thank you for your attention and I ask you to vote yes on HB2340.

Rep Susan Ruiz
District #23