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SENATE BILL NO. 257

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations

on \_\_\_\_\_)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Senator Hashmi)

A BILL directing the Department of Health Professions to review and evaluate the merits and impact of the Commonwealth entering into the multistate Counseling Compact.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

1. § 1. That the Department of Health Professions (the Department) shall review the merits of the Commonwealth entering into the Counseling Compact, an interstate compact to facilitate the interstate practice of licensed professional counselors. The Department shall evaluate the Counseling Compact's impacts on (i) state and local costs associated with entering the Counseling Compact, (ii) the potential increase in public access to counseling services, (iii) the opportunity to support spouses of relocating active duty military personnel, (iv) benefits that may result from the exchange of licensure, investigative, and disciplinary information among states that are members of the Counseling Compact, (v) facilitating the use of telehealth technology to increase public access to counseling services, (vi) eliminating the need for multistate licensure of counselors, (vii) quantifiable enhancements to public health and safety, and (viii) any other factor deemed relevant by the Department. The Department shall report its findings to the General Assembly no later than September 1, 2022.

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