

Department of Planning and Budget 2022 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** SB257

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Hashmi

3. **Committee:** Finance and Appropriations

4. **Title:** Licensure of professional counselors; Counseling Compact.

5. **Summary:** Authorizes Virginia to become a signatory to the Counseling Compact. The Compact permits eligible licensed professional counselors to practice in Compact member states, provided that they are licensed in at least one member state. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2023, and directs the Board of Counseling to adopt emergency regulations to implement the provisions of the bill. The Compact takes effect when it is enacted by a tenth member state.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** See item 8.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Indeterminate, see item 8.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** The fiscal impact the provisions of this legislation would have on the Commonwealth cannot be determined. The Department of Health Professions (DHP) and the Board of Counseling would incur costs for participation in the Counseling Compact; however, there is insufficient information available to determine the impact. Costs to become a member of the Compact have not yet been identified as it is not yet operational and won't take effect until it is enacted by a tenth member state. Other member costs include office space, operational expenses, and a data system for the Compact, which according to the bill will need to be funded by the member states. The provisions of the bill state that to participate in the compact a member state shall license counselors and have in place a mechanism for investigating complaints about licensees, which DHP currently does. Additionally, any potential loss of revenue from current licensees who live in other states, who may let their Virginia license lapse and continue practicing on a compact privilege, cannot be determined. Finally, the cost to obtain compact privileges for a counselor has not been determined.

9. **Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Health Professions.

10. **Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

11. **Other Comments:** None.