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**May 13, 2019**

**RE: SB 679 – Support**

Dear Sen. Bates,

My name is Steven Greenhut and I am senior fellow and Western Region Director at the R Street Institute. R Street is a think tank devoted to pragmatic free-market solutions to public policy challenges including occupational-licensing reform. We have maintained a Sacramento office focused on California issues since 2014.

I write you in support of S.B. 679, legislation that streamlines the process for re-licensing professional clinical counselors, marriage and family therapists and clinical social workers who have moved to California. The measure would enable professionals, who have been licensed for two years in other states, to continue working in their professions without delay. It would help fill the intense demand for these professionals. It also serves as a model for licensing reform, by removing unnecessary impediments for fully qualified mental-health professionals from other states.

In signing a more wide-ranging bill that allows workers in most fields to move to his state without further review, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey noted that “you don’t lose your skills simply because you pack up a U-Haul truck and make the decision to move to Arizona.” Although this California measure is targeted to a few high-demand professions, the same principle is true. Mental-health professionals don’t lose their skills when they move to the Golden State. Furthermore, this bill requires these incoming professionals to complete some California-specific coursework, which should remove any concerns about them operating here.

S.B. 679 affirms the ideas advocated by California’s independent watchdog agency, the Little Hoover Commission, which in 2016 recommended a review of licensing requirements in other states and the granting of “partial reciprocity for professionals licensed in states with appropriately comparable testing and education requirements.”

As Sen. Bates office explains, “If successful, the (licensing) board intends to promote the proposal to its counterpart state licensing agencies, with the goal of it becoming a model to promote increased access to mental health services and increased licensure opportunities nationwide.” That’s a noble effort that will help these mental-health professionals, their clients and employing agencies, and the state’s mental-health system in general. We certainly hope that it provides a nationwide model, too.

We would also like to see broader reforms to this effect. People who work in fields including barbering, nursing, the building trades and plumbing also have the need to begin working in their chosen fields

soon after moving to California. Nevertheless, this bill is an important step in that direction and deserves wide, bipartisan support.

Feel free to contact me at (909) 260-9836 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Greenhut", written in a cursive style.

Steven Greenhut  
Western region director  
R Street Institute