

2023 -- S 0275 SUBSTITUTE A

LC000290/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT

Introduced By: Senators Miller, DiPalma, Euer, DiMario, Lauria, Lawson, Ujifusa,
Kallman, Murray, and Valverde

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 5-34.3-3, 5-34.3-4, 5-34.3-5, 5-34.3-6, 5-34.3-8, 5-34.3-9, 5-34.3-
2 10, 5-34.3-12 and 5-34.3-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-34.3 entitled "Nurse Licensure
3 Compact" are hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **5-34.3-3. Legislative findings.**

5 (a) The general assembly finds and declares that:

6 (1) The health and safety of the public are affected by the degree of compliance with and
7 the effectiveness of enforcement activities related to state nurse licensure laws;

8 (2) Violations of nurse licensure and other laws regulating the practice of nursing may
9 result in injury or harm to the public;

10 (3) The expanded mobility of nurses and the use of advanced communication technologies
11 as part of our nation's healthcare delivery system require greater coordination and cooperation
12 among states in the areas of nurse licensure and regulations;

13 (4) New practice modalities and technology make compliance with individual state nurse
14 licensure laws difficult and complex; ~~and~~

15 (5) The current system of duplicative licensure for nurses practicing in multiple states is
16 cumbersome and redundant to both nurses and states; ~~;~~ and

17 (6) Uniformity of nurse licensure requirements throughout the states promotes public safety
18 and public health benefits.

19 (b) The general purposes of this compact are to:

- 1 (1) Facilitate the states' responsibility to protect the public's health and safety;
- 2 (2) Ensure and encourage the cooperation of party states in the areas of nurse licensure and
3 regulation;
- 4 (3) Facilitate the exchange of information between party states in the areas of nurse
5 regulation, investigation and adverse actions;
- 6 (4) Promote compliance with the laws governing the practice of nursing in each
7 jurisdiction; ~~and~~
- 8 (5) Invest all party states with the authority to hold a nurse accountable for meeting all state
9 practice laws in the state in which the patient is located at the time care is rendered through the
10 mutual recognition of party state licenses;

11 (6) Decrease redundancies in the consideration and issuance of nurse licenses; and

12 (7) Provide opportunities for interstate practice by nurses who meet uniform licensure
13 requirements.

14 **5-34.3-4. Definitions.**

15 As used in this chapter:

16 (1) "Adverse action" means ~~a home or remote state action~~ any administrative, civil,
17 equitable or criminal action permitted by a state's laws which is imposed by a licensing board or
18 other authority against a nurse, including actions against an individual's license or multistate
19 licensure privilege such as revocation, suspension, probation, monitoring of the licensee, limitation
20 on the licensee's practice, or any other encumbrance on licensure affecting a nurse's authorization
21 to practice, including issuance of a cease and desist action.

22 (2) "Alternative program" means a voluntary, nondisciplinary monitoring program
23 approved by a nurse licensing board.

24 (3) "Commission" means the interstate commission of nurse license compact
25 administrators, the governing body of the nurse licensure compact.

26 ~~(3)~~(4) "Coordinated licensure information system" means an integrated process for
27 collecting, storing, and sharing information on nurse licensure and enforcement activities related
28 to nurse licensure laws, which is administered by a nonprofit organization composed of and
29 controlled by state nurse licensing boards.

30 ~~(4)~~(5) "Current significant investigative information" means investigative information that
31 a licensing board, after a preliminary inquiry that includes notification and an opportunity for the
32 nurse to respond if required by state law, has reason to believe is not groundless and, if proved true,
33 would indicate more than a minor infraction; or investigative information that indicates that the
34 nurse represents an immediate threat to public health and safety regardless of whether the nurse has

1 been notified and had an opportunity to respond.

2 (6) "Encumbrance" means a revocation or suspension of, or any limitation placed on, the
3 full and unrestricted practice of nursing imposed by a licensing board.

4 ~~(5)~~(7) "Home state" means the party state which is the nurse's primary state of residence.

5 ~~(6)~~(8) "Home state action" means any administrative, civil, equitable, or criminal action
6 permitted by the home state's laws which are imposed on a nurse by the home state's licensing
7 board or other authority including actions against an individual's license such as: revocation,
8 suspension, probation or any other action which affects a nurse's authorization to practice.

9 ~~(7)~~(9) "Licensing board" means a party state's regulatory body responsible for issuing
10 nurse licenses.

11 ~~(8)~~(10) "Multistate licensure ~~privilege~~" means ~~current, official authority from a remote~~
12 ~~state permitting the practice of nursing as either a registered nurse or a licensed practical/vocational~~
13 ~~nurse in such party state. All party states have the authority, in accordance with existing state due~~
14 ~~process law, to take actions against the nurse's privilege such as: revocation, suspension, probation,~~
15 ~~or any other action which affects a nurse's authorization to practice~~ a license to practice as a
16 registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse/vocational nurse (LPN/VN) issued by a home
17 state licensing board, that authorizes the licensed nurse to practice in all party states under a
18 multistate licensure privilege.

19 (11) "Multistate licensure privilege" means a legal authorization associated with a
20 multistate license, permitting the practice of nursing as either a registered nurse (RN) or licensed
21 practical nurse/vocational nurse (LPN/VN) in a remote state.

22 ~~(9)~~(12) "Nurse" means a registered nurse or licensed practical/vocational nurse, as those
23 terms are defined by each party's state practice laws.

24 ~~(10)~~(13) "Party state" means any state that has adopted this compact.

25 ~~(11)~~(14) "Remote state" means a party state, other than the home state, ~~where the patient~~
26 ~~is located at the time nursing care is provided, or, in the case of the practice of nursing not involving~~
27 ~~a patient, in such party state where the recipient of nursing practice is located.~~

28 ~~(12)~~(15) "Remote state action" means any administrative, civil, equitable or criminal action
29 permitted by a remote state's laws which are imposed on a nurse by the remote state's licensing
30 board or other authority including actions against an individual's multistate licensure privilege to
31 practice in the remote state, and cease and desist and other injunctive or equitable orders issued by
32 remote states or the licensing boards thereof.

33 (16) "Single-state license" means a nurse license issued by a party state that authorizes
34 practice only within the issuing state and does not include a multistate licensure privilege to practice

1 [in any other party state.](#)

2 ~~(13)~~(17) "State" means a state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of
3 Columbia.

4 ~~(14)~~(18) "State practice laws" means those individual party's state laws and regulations
5 that govern the practice of nursing, define the scope of nursing practice, and create the methods
6 and grounds for imposing discipline. It does not include the initial qualifications for licensure or
7 requirements necessary to obtain and retain a license, except for qualifications or requirements of
8 the home state.

9 **5-34.3-5. Permitted activities and jurisdiction. General provisions and jurisdiction.**

10 ~~(a) A license to practice registered nursing issued by a home state to a resident in that state~~
11 ~~will be recognized by each party state as authorizing a multistate licensure privilege to practice as~~
12 ~~a registered nurse in such party state. A license to practice licensed practical/vocational nursing~~
13 ~~issued by a home state to a resident in that state will be recognized by each party state as authorizing~~
14 ~~a multistate licensure privilege to practice as a licensed practical/vocational nurse in such party~~
15 ~~state. In order to obtain or retain a license, an applicant must meet the home state's qualifications~~
16 ~~for licensure and license renewal as well as all other applicable state laws.~~

17 ~~(b) Party states may, in accordance with state due process laws, limit or revoke the~~
18 ~~multistate licensure privilege of any nurse to practice in their state and may take any other actions~~
19 ~~under their applicable state laws necessary to protect the health and safety of their citizens. If a~~
20 ~~party state takes such action, it shall promptly notify the administrator of the coordinated licensure~~
21 ~~information system. The administrator of the coordinated licensure information system shall~~
22 ~~promptly notify the home state of any such actions by remote states.~~

23 ~~(c) Every nurse practicing in a party state must comply with the state practice laws of the~~
24 ~~state in which the patient is located at the time care is rendered. In addition, the practice of nursing~~
25 ~~is not limited to patient care, but shall include all nursing practice as defined by the state practice~~
26 ~~laws of a party state. The practice of nursing will subject a nurse to the jurisdiction of the nurse~~
27 ~~licensing board and courts, as well as the laws, in that party state.~~

28 ~~(d) This compact does not affect additional requirements imposed by states for advanced~~
29 ~~practice registered nursing. However, a multistate licensure privilege to practice registered nursing~~
30 ~~granted by a party shall be recognized by other party states as a license to practice registered nursing~~
31 ~~if one is required by state law as a precondition for qualifying for advanced practice registered~~
32 ~~nurse authorization.~~

33 ~~(e) Individuals not residing in a party state shall continue to be able to apply for nurse~~
34 ~~licensure as provided for under the laws of each party state. However, the license granted to these~~

~~1 individuals will not be recognized as granting the privilege to practice nursing in any other party
2 state unless explicitly agreed to by that party state.~~

3 (a) A multistate license to practice registered or licensed practical nursing/vocational
4 nursing issued by a home state to a resident in that state will be recognized by each party state as
5 authorizing a nurse to practice as a registered nurse (RN) or as a licensed practical nurse/vocational
6 nurse (LPN/VN), under a multistate licensure privilege, in each party state.

7 (b) A state must implement procedures for considering the criminal history records of
8 applicants for initial multistate license or licensure by endorsement. Such procedures shall include
9 the submission of fingerprints or other biometric-based information by applicants for the purpose
10 of obtaining an applicant's criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of
11 Investigation, and the agency responsible for maintaining that state's criminal records.

12 (c) Each party state shall require the following for an applicant to obtain or retain a
13 multistate license in the home state:

14 (1) Meets the home state's qualifications for licensure or renewal of licensure, as well as
15 all other applicable state laws;

16 (2)(i) Has graduated or is eligible to graduate from a licensing board-approved RN or
17 LPN/VN prelicensure education program; or

18 (ii) Has graduated from a foreign RN or LPN/VN prelicensure education program that:

19 (A) Has been approved by the authorized accrediting body in the applicable country; and

20 (B) Has been verified by an independent credentials review agency to be comparable to a
21 licensing board-approved prelicensure education program;

22 (3) Has, if a graduate of a foreign prelicensure education program not taught in English or
23 if English is not the individual's native language, successfully passed an English proficiency
24 examination that includes the components of reading, speaking, writing and listening;

25 (4) Has successfully passed an NCLEX-RN® or NCLEX-PN® Examination or recognized
26 predecessor, as applicable;

27 (5) Is eligible for or holds an active, unencumbered license;

28 (6) Has submitted, in connection with an application for initial licensure or licensure by
29 endorsement, fingerprints or other biometric data for the purpose of obtaining criminal history
30 record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the agency responsible for
31 maintaining that state's criminal records;

32 (7) Has not been convicted or found guilty nor entered into an agreed disposition of a felony
33 offense under applicable state or federal criminal law;

34 (8) Has not been convicted or found guilty nor entered into an agreed disposition of a

1 misdemeanor offense related to the practice of nursing as determined on a case-by-case basis;

2 (9) Is not currently enrolled in an alternative program;

3 (10) Is subject to self-disclosure requirements regarding current participation in an
4 alternative program; and

5 (11) Has a valid United States Social Security number.

6 (d) All party states shall be authorized, in accordance with existing state due process law,
7 to take adverse action against a nurse's multistate licensure privilege such as revocation, suspension,
8 probation or any other action that affects a nurse's authorization to practice under a multistate
9 licensure privilege, including cease and desist actions. If a party state takes such action, it shall
10 promptly notify the administrator of the coordinated licensure information system. The
11 administrator of the coordinated licensure information system shall promptly notify the home state
12 of any such actions by remote states.

13 (e) A nurse practicing in a party state must comply with the state practice laws of the state
14 in which the client is located at the time service is provided. The practice of nursing is not limited
15 to patient care, but shall include all nursing practice as defined by the state practice laws of the
16 party state in which the client is located. The practice of nursing in a party state under a multistate
17 licensure privilege will subject a nurse to the jurisdiction of the licensing board, the courts and the
18 laws of the party state in which the client is located at the time service is provided.

19 (f) Individuals not residing in a party state shall continue to be able to apply for a party
20 state's single-state license as provided under the laws of each party state. However, the single-state
21 license granted to these individuals will not be recognized as granting the privilege to practice
22 nursing in any other party state. Nothing in this compact shall affect the requirements established
23 by a party state for the issuance of a single-state license.

24 (g) Any nurse holding a home state multistate license, on the effective date of this compact,
25 may retain and renew the multistate license issued by the nurse's then-current home state, provided
26 that:

27 (1) A nurse, who changes primary state of residence after this compact's effective date,
28 must meet all applicable requirements to obtain a multistate license from a new home state; and

29 (2) A nurse who fails to satisfy the multistate licensure requirements due to a disqualifying
30 event occurring after this compact's effective date shall be ineligible to retain or renew a multistate
31 license, and the nurse's multistate license shall be revoked or deactivated in accordance with
32 applicable rules adopted by the commission.

33 **5-34.3-6. Applications for licensure in a party state.**

34 ~~(a) Upon application for a license, the licensing board in a party state shall ascertain,~~

1 ~~through the coordinated licensure information system, whether the applicant has ever held, or is the~~
2 ~~holder of, a license issued by any other state, whether there are any restrictions on the multistate~~
3 ~~licensure privilege, and whether any other adverse action by any state has been taken against the~~
4 ~~license.~~

5 ~~(b) A nurse in a party state shall hold licensure in only one party state at a time, issued by~~
6 ~~the home state.~~

7 ~~(c) A nurse who intends to change primary state of residence may apply for licensure in~~
8 ~~the new home state in advance of such change. However, new licenses will not be issued by a party~~
9 ~~state until after a nurse provides evidence of change in primary state of residence satisfactory to the~~
10 ~~new home state's licensing board.~~

11 ~~(d) When a nurse changes primary state of residence by;~~

12 ~~(1) Moving between two party states, and obtains a license from the new home state, the~~
13 ~~license from the former home state is no longer valid;~~

14 ~~(2) Moving from a non party state to a party state, and obtains a license from the new home~~
15 ~~state, the individual state license issued by the non party state is not affected and will remain in full~~
16 ~~force if so provided by the laws of the non party state;~~

17 ~~(3) Moving from a party state to a non party state, the license issued by the prior home~~
18 ~~state converts to an individual state license, valid only in the former home state, without the~~
19 ~~multistate licensure privilege to practice in other party states.~~

20 (a) Upon application for a multistate license, the licensing board in the issuing party state
21 shall ascertain, through the coordinated licensure information system, whether the applicant has
22 ever held, or is the holder of, a license issued by any other state, whether there are any
23 encumbrances on any license or multistate licensure privilege held by the applicant, whether any
24 adverse action has been taken against any license or multistate licensure privilege held by the
25 applicant and whether the applicant is currently participating in an alternative program.

26 (b) A nurse may hold a multistate license, issued by the home state, in only one party state
27 at a time.

28 (c) If a nurse changes primary state of residence by moving between two (2) party states,
29 the nurse must apply for licensure in the new home state, and the multistate license issued by the
30 prior home state will be deactivated in accordance with applicable rules adopted by the commission.

31 (1) The nurse may apply for licensure in advance of a change in primary state of residence.

32 (2) A multistate license shall not be issued by the new home state until the nurse provides
33 satisfactory evidence of a change in primary state of residence to the new home state and satisfies
34 all applicable requirements to obtain a multistate license from the new home state.

1 (d) If a nurse changes primary state of residence by moving from a party state to a non-
2 party state, the multistate license issued by the prior home state will convert to a single-state license,
3 valid only in the former home state.

4 **5-34.3-8. Additional authorities invested in party state nurse licensing boards.**

5 (a) Notwithstanding any other powers conferred by state law, party state nurse licensing
6 boards shall have the authority to:

7 ~~(1) If otherwise permitted by state law, recover from the affected nurse the costs of~~
8 ~~investigations and disposition of cases resulting from any adverse action taken against that nurse;~~

9 ~~(2) Issue subpoenas for both hearings and investigations which require the attendance and~~
10 ~~testimony of witnesses, and the production of evidence. Subpoenas issued by a nurse licensing~~
11 ~~board in a party state for the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and/or the production of~~
12 ~~evidence from another party state, shall be enforced in the latter state by any court of competent~~
13 ~~jurisdiction, according to the practice and procedure of that court applicable to subpoenas issued in~~
14 ~~proceedings pending before it. The issuing authority shall pay any witness fees, travel expenses,~~
15 ~~mileage and other fees required by the service statutes of the state where the witnesses and/or~~
16 ~~evidence are located.~~

17 ~~(3) Issue cease and desist orders to limit or revoke a nurse's authority to practice in their~~
18 ~~state;~~

19 ~~(4) Promulgate uniform rules and regulations as provided for in § 5-34.3-10(e).~~

20 (1) Take adverse action against a nurse's multistate licensure privilege to practice within
21 that party state.

22 (i) Only the home state shall have the power to take adverse action against a nurse's license
23 issued by the home state.

24 (ii) For purposes of taking adverse action, the home state licensing board shall give the
25 same priority and effect to reported conduct received from a remote state as it would if such conduct
26 had occurred within the home state. In so doing, the home state shall apply its own state laws to
27 determine appropriate action.

28 (2) Issue cease and desist orders or impose an encumbrance on a nurse's authority to
29 practice within that party state.

30 (3) Complete any pending investigations of a nurse who changes primary state of residence
31 during the course of such investigations. The licensing board shall also have the authority to take
32 appropriate action(s) and shall promptly report the conclusions of such investigations to the
33 administrator of the coordinated licensure information system. The administrator of the coordinated
34 licensure information system shall promptly notify the new home state of any such actions.

1 (4) Issue subpoenas for both hearings and investigations that require the attendance and
2 testimony of witnesses, as well as, the production of evidence. Subpoenas issued by a licensing
3 board in a party state for the attendance and testimony of witnesses or the production of evidence
4 from another party state shall be enforced in the latter state by any court of competent jurisdiction,
5 according to the practice and procedure of that court applicable to subpoenas issued in proceedings
6 pending before it. The issuing authority shall pay any witness fees, travel expenses, mileage and
7 other fees required by the service statutes of the state in which the witnesses or evidence are located.

8 (5) Obtain and submit, for each nurse licensure applicant, fingerprint or other biometric-
9 based information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for criminal background checks, receive
10 the results of the Federal Bureau of Investigation record search on criminal background checks and
11 use the results in making licensure decisions.

12 (6) If otherwise permitted by state law, recover from the affected nurse the costs of
13 investigations and disposition of cases resulting from any adverse action taken against that nurse.

14 (7) Take adverse action based on the factual findings of the remote state, provided that the
15 licensing board follows its own procedures for taking such adverse action.

16 (b) If adverse action is taken by the home state against a nurse's multistate license, the
17 nurse's multistate licensure privilege to practice in all other party states shall be deactivated until
18 all encumbrances have been removed from the multistate license. All home state disciplinary orders
19 that impose adverse action against a nurse's multistate license shall include a statement that the
20 nurse's multistate licensure privilege is deactivated in all party states during the pendency of the
21 order.

22 (c) Nothing in this compact shall override a party state's decision that participation in an
23 alternative program may be used in lieu of adverse action. The home state licensing board shall
24 deactivate the multistate licensure privilege under the multistate license of any nurse for the
25 duration of the nurse's participation in an alternative program.

26 **5-34.3-9. ~~Coordinated licensure information system.~~ Coordinated licensure**
27 **information system and exchange of information.**

28 (a) All party states shall participate in a ~~cooperative effort to create a~~ coordinated ~~database~~
29 licensure information system of all licensed registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical
30 nurses/vocational nurses (LPNs/VNs). This system will include information on the licensure and
31 disciplinary history of each nurse, as ~~contributed~~ submitted by party states, to assist in the
32 coordination of nurse licensure and enforcement efforts.

33 ~~(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all party states' licensing boards shall~~
34 ~~promptly report adverse actions, actions against multistate licensure privileges, any current~~

1 ~~significant investigative information yet to result in adverse action, denials of applications, and the~~
2 ~~reasons for such denials, to the coordinated licensure information system.~~

3 (b) The commission, in consultation with the administrator of the coordinated licensure
4 information system, shall formulate necessary and proper procedures for the identification,
5 collection and exchange of information under this compact.

6 (c) All licensing boards shall promptly report to the coordinated licensure information
7 system any adverse action, any current significant investigative information, denials of applications
8 (with the reasons for such denials) and nurse participation in alternative programs known to the
9 licensing board regardless of whether such participation is deemed nonpublic or confidential under
10 state law.

11 ~~(d)~~ (d) Current significant investigative information shall be transmitted through the
12 coordinated licensure information system only to party state licensing boards.

13 ~~(e)~~ (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all party states' licensing boards
14 contributing information to the coordinated licensure information system may designate
15 information that may not be shared with non-party states or disclosed to other entities or individuals
16 without the express permission of the contributing state.

17 ~~(f)~~ (f) Any personally identifiable information obtained from the coordinated licensure
18 information system by a party state's licensing board shall ~~from the coordinated licensure~~
19 ~~information system may~~ not be shared with non-party states or disclosed to other entities or
20 individuals except to the extent permitted by the laws of the party state contributing the information.

21 ~~(g)~~ (g) Any information contributed to the coordinated licensure information system that is
22 subsequently required to be expunged by the laws of the party state contributing that information,
23 shall also be expunged from the coordinated licensure information system.

24 ~~(g) The compact administrators, acting jointly with each other and in consultation with the~~
25 ~~administrator of the coordinated licensure information system, shall formulate necessary and proper~~
26 ~~procedures for the identification, collection and exchange of information under this compact.~~

27 (h) The compact administrator of each party state shall furnish a uniform data set to the
28 compact administrator of each other party state, which shall include, at a minimum:

29 (1) Identifying information;

30 (2) Licensure data;

31 (3) Information related to alternative program participation; and

32 (4) Other information that may facilitate the administration of this compact, as determined
33 by commission rules.

34 (i) The compact administrator of a party state shall provide all investigative documents and

1 information requested by another party state.

2 **5-34.3-10. Compact administration and interchange of information. Establishment of**
3 **the interstate commission of nurse licensure compact administrators.**

4 ~~(a) The head of the nurse licensing board, or his/her designee, of each party state shall be~~
5 ~~the administrator of this compact for his/her state.~~

6 ~~(b) The compact administrator of each party shall furnish to the compact administrator of~~
7 ~~each other party state any information and documents including, but not limited to, a uniform data~~
8 ~~set of investigations, identifying information, licensure data, and disclosable alternative program~~
9 ~~participation information to facilitate the administration of this compact.~~

10 ~~(c) Compact administrators shall have the authority to develop uniform rules to facilitate~~
11 ~~and coordinate implementation of this compact. These uniform rules shall be adopted by party~~
12 ~~states, under the authority invested under § 5-34.3-8(4).~~

13 (a) The party states hereby create and establish a joint public entity known as the interstate
14 commission of nurse licensure compact administrators (the "commission").

15 (1) The commission is an instrumentality of the party states.

16 (2) Venue is proper, and judicial proceedings by or against the commission shall be brought
17 solely and exclusively, in a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the
18 commission is located. The commission may waive venue and jurisdictional defenses to the extent
19 it adopts or consents to participate in alternative dispute resolution proceedings.

20 (3) Nothing in this compact shall be construed to be a waiver of sovereign immunity.

21 (b) Membership, voting and meetings:

22 (1) Each party state shall have and be limited to one administrator. The head of the state
23 licensing board or designee shall be the administrator of this compact for each party state. Any
24 administrator may be removed or suspended from office as provided by the law of the state from
25 which the administrator is appointed. Any vacancy occurring in the commission shall be filled in
26 accordance with the laws of the party state in which the vacancy exists.

27 (2) Each administrator shall be entitled to one vote with regard to the promulgation of rules
28 and creation of bylaws and shall otherwise have an opportunity to participate in the business and
29 affairs of the commission. An administrator shall vote in person or by such other means as provided
30 in the bylaws. The bylaws may provide for an administrator's participation in meetings by telephone
31 or other means of communication.

32 (3) The commission shall meet at least once during each calendar year. Additional meetings
33 shall be held as set forth in the bylaws or rules of the commission.

34 (4) All meetings shall be open to the public, and public notice of meetings shall be given

1 in the same manner as required under the rulemaking provisions in § 5-34.3-10.1.

2 (5) The commission may convene in a closed, nonpublic meeting if the commission must
3 discuss:

4 (i) Noncompliance of a party state with its obligations under this compact;

5 (ii) The employment, compensation, discipline or other personnel matters, practices or
6 procedures related to specific employees or other matters related to the commission's internal
7 personnel practices and procedures;

8 (iii) Current, threatened or reasonably anticipated litigation;

9 (iv) Negotiation of contracts for the purchase or sale of goods, services or real estate;

10 (v) Accusing any person of a crime or formally censuring any person;

11 (vi) Disclosure of trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or
12 confidential;

13 (vii) Disclosure of information of a personal nature where disclosure would constitute a
14 clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

15 (viii) Disclosure of investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes;

16 (ix) Disclosure of information related to any reports prepared by or on behalf of the
17 commission for the purpose of investigation of compliance with this compact; or

18 (x) Matters specifically exempted from disclosure by federal or state statute.

19 (6) If a meeting, or portion of a meeting, is closed pursuant to this provision, the
20 commission's legal counsel or designee shall certify that the meeting may be closed and shall
21 reference each relevant exempting provision. The commission shall keep minutes that fully and
22 clearly describe all matters discussed in a meeting and shall provide a full and accurate summary
23 of actions taken, and the reasons therefor, including a description of the views expressed. All
24 documents considered in connection with an action shall be identified in such minutes. All minutes
25 and documents of a closed meeting shall remain under seal, subject to release by a majority vote of
26 the commission or order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

27 (c) The commission shall, by a majority vote of the administrators, prescribe bylaws or
28 rules to govern its conduct as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes and exercise
29 the powers of this compact, including, but not limited to:

30 (1) Establishing the fiscal year of the commission;

31 (2) Providing reasonable standards and procedures:

32 (i) For the establishment and meetings of other committees; and

33 (ii) Governing any general or specific delegation of any authority or function of the
34 commission;

1 (3) Providing reasonable procedures for calling and conducting meetings of the
2 commission, ensuring reasonable advance notice of all meetings and providing an opportunity for
3 attendance of such meetings by interested parties, with enumerated exceptions designed to protect
4 the public's interest, the privacy of individuals, and proprietary information, including trade secrets.
5 The commission may meet in closed session only after a majority of the administrators vote to close
6 a meeting in whole or in part. As soon as practicable, the commission must make public a copy of
7 the vote to close the meeting revealing the vote of each administrator, with no proxy votes allowed;

8 (4) Establishing the titles, duties, authority, and reasonable procedures for the election of
9 the officers of the commission;

10 (5) Providing reasonable standards and procedures for the establishment of the personnel
11 policies and programs of the commission. Notwithstanding any civil service or other similar laws
12 of any party state, the bylaws shall exclusively govern the personnel policies and programs of the
13 commission; and

14 (6) Providing a mechanism for winding up the operations of the commission and the
15 equitable disposition of any surplus funds that may exist after the termination of this compact, after
16 the payment or reserving of all of its debts and obligations.

17 (d) The commission shall publish its bylaws and rules, and any amendments thereto, in a
18 convenient form on the website of the commission.

19 (e) The commission shall maintain its financial records in accordance with the bylaws.

20 (f) The commission shall meet and take such actions as are consistent with the provisions
21 of this compact and the bylaws.

22 (g) The commission shall have the following powers:

23 (1) To promulgate uniform rules to facilitate and coordinate implementation and
24 administration of this compact. The rules shall have the force and effect of law and shall be binding
25 in all party states;

26 (2) To bring and prosecute legal proceedings or actions in the name of the commission,
27 provided that the standing of any licensing board to sue or be sued under applicable law shall not
28 be affected;

29 (3) To purchase and maintain insurance and bonds;

30 (4) To borrow, accept or contract for services of personnel, including, but not limited to,
31 employees of a party state or nonprofit organizations;

32 (5) To cooperate with other organizations that administer state compacts related to the
33 regulation of nursing, including, but not limited to, sharing administrative or staff expenses, office
34 space or other resources;

1 (6) To hire employees, elect or appoint officers, fix compensation, define duties, grant such
2 individuals appropriate authority to carry out the purposes of this compact, and to establish the
3 commission's personnel policies and programs relating to conflicts of interest, qualifications of
4 personnel and other related personnel matters;

5 (7) To accept any and all appropriate donations, grants and gifts of money, equipment,
6 supplies, materials and services, and to receive, utilize and dispose of the same; provided that at all
7 times the commission shall avoid any appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest;

8 (8) To lease, purchase, accept appropriate gifts or donations of, or otherwise to own, hold,
9 improve or use, any property, whether real, personal or mixed; provided that at all times the
10 commission shall avoid any appearance of impropriety;

11 (9) To sell, convey, mortgage, pledge, lease, exchange, abandon or otherwise dispose of
12 any property, whether real, personal or mixed;

13 (10) To establish a budget and make expenditures;

14 (11) To borrow money;

15 (12) To appoint committees, including advisory committees comprised of administrators,
16 state nursing regulators, state legislators or their representatives, and consumer representatives, and
17 other such interested persons;

18 (13) To provide and receive information from, and to cooperate with, law enforcement
19 agencies;

20 (14) To adopt and use an official seal; and

21 (15) To perform such other functions as may be necessary or appropriate to achieve the
22 purposes of this compact consistent with the state regulation of nurse licensure and practice.

23 (h) Financing of the commission.

24 (1) The commission shall pay, or provide for the payment of, the reasonable expenses of
25 its establishment, organization and ongoing activities;

26 (2) The commission may also levy on and collect an annual assessment from each party
27 state to cover the cost of its operations, activities and staff in its annual budget as approved each
28 year. The aggregate annual assessment amount, if any, shall be allocated based upon a formula to
29 be determined by the commission, which shall promulgate a rule that is binding upon all party
30 states;

31 (3) The commission shall not incur obligations of any kind prior to securing the funds
32 adequate to meet the same; nor shall the commission pledge the credit of any of the party states,
33 except by, and with the authority of, such party state;

34 (4) The commission shall keep accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements. The

1 receipts and disbursements of the commission shall be subject to the audit and accounting
2 procedures established under its bylaws. However, all receipts and disbursements of funds handled
3 by the commission shall be audited yearly by a certified or licensed public accountant, and the
4 report of the audit shall be included in and become part of the annual report of the commission.

5 (i) Qualified immunity, defense and indemnification.

6 (1) The administrators, officers, executive director, employees and representatives of the
7 commission shall be immune from suit and liability, either personally or in their official capacity,
8 for any claim for damage to or loss of property or personal injury or other civil liability caused by
9 or arising out of any actual or alleged act, error or omission that occurred, or that the person against
10 whom the claim is made had a reasonable basis for believing occurred, within the scope of
11 commission employment, duties or responsibilities; provided that nothing in this paragraph shall
12 be construed to protect any such person from suit or liability for any damage, loss, injury or liability
13 caused by the intentional, willful or wanton misconduct of that person;

14 (2) The commission shall defend any administrator, officer, executive director, employee
15 or representative of the commission in any civil action seeking to impose liability arising out of
16 any actual or alleged act, error or omission that occurred within the scope of commission
17 employment, duties or responsibilities, or that the person against whom the claim is made had a
18 reasonable basis for believing occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or
19 responsibilities; provided that nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit that person from
20 retaining their own counsel; and provided further that the actual or alleged act, error or omission
21 did not result from that person's intentional, willful or wanton misconduct;

22 (3) The commission shall indemnify and hold harmless any administrator, officer,
23 executive director, employee or representative of the commission for the amount of any settlement
24 or judgment obtained against that person arising out of any actual or alleged act, error or omission
25 that occurred within the scope of commission employment, duties or responsibilities, or that such
26 person had a reasonable basis for believing occurred within the scope of commission employment,
27 duties or responsibilities, provided that the actual or alleged act, error or omission did not result
28 from the intentional, willful or wanton misconduct of that person.

29 **5-34.3-12. Entry into force, withdrawal and amendment. Effective date, withdrawal**
30 **and amendment.**

31 ~~(a) This compact shall enter into force and become effective as to any state when it has~~
32 ~~been enacted into the laws of that state. Any party state may withdraw from this compact by~~
33 ~~enacting a statute repealing the same, but no such withdrawal shall take effect until six (6) months~~
34 ~~after the withdrawing state has given notice of the withdrawal to the executive heads of all other~~

1 ~~party states.~~

2 ~~(b) No withdrawal shall affect the validity or applicability by the licensing boards of states~~
3 ~~remaining party to the compact of any report of adverse action occurring prior to the withdrawal.~~

4 ~~(c) Nothing contained in this compact shall be construed to invalidate or prevent any nurse~~
5 ~~licensure agreement or other cooperative arrangement between a party state and a non-party state~~
6 ~~that is made in accordance with the other provisions of this compact.~~

7 ~~(d) This compact may be amended by the party states. No amendment to this compact shall~~
8 ~~become effective and binding upon the party states unless and until it is enacted into the laws of all~~
9 ~~party states.~~

10 (a) This compact shall become effective upon passage. All party states to this compact, that
11 also were parties to the prior nurse licensure compact superseded by this compact ("prior
12 compact"), shall be deemed to have withdrawn from said prior compact within six (6) months after
13 the effective date of this compact.

14 (b) Each party state to this compact shall continue to recognize a nurse's multistate
15 licensure privilege to practice in that party state issued under the prior compact until such party
16 state has withdrawn from the prior compact.

17 (c) Any party state may withdraw from this compact by enacting a statute repealing the
18 same. A party state's withdrawal shall not take effect until six (6) months after enactment of the
19 repealing statute.

20 (d) A party state's withdrawal or termination shall not affect the continuing requirement of
21 the withdrawing or terminated state's licensing board to report adverse actions and significant
22 investigations occurring prior to the effective date of such withdrawal or termination.

23 (e) Nothing contained in this compact shall be construed to invalidate or prevent any nurse
24 licensure agreement or other cooperative arrangement between a party state and a non-party state
25 that is made in accordance with the other provisions of this compact.

26 (f) This compact may be amended by the party states. No amendment to this compact shall
27 become effective and binding upon the party states unless and until it is enacted into the laws of all
28 party states.

29 (g) Representatives of non-party states to this compact shall be invited to participate in the
30 activities of the commission, on a nonvoting basis, prior to the adoption of this compact by all
31 states.

32 **5-34.3-14. Construction and severability.**

33 ~~(a)~~ This compact shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate the purposes thereof. The
34 provisions of this compact shall be severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of

1 this compact is declared to be contrary to the constitution of any party state or of the United States
2 or the applicability thereof to any government, agency, person or circumstance is held invalid, the
3 validity of the remainder of this compact and the applicability thereof to any government, agency,
4 person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby. If this compact shall be held contrary to the
5 constitution of any state party thereto, the compact shall remain in full force and effect as to the
6 remaining party states and in full force and effect as to the party state affected as to all severable
7 matters.

8 ~~(b) In the event party states find a need for settling disputes arising under this compact:~~

9 ~~(1) The party states may submit the issues in dispute to an arbitration panel which will be~~
10 ~~comprised of an individual appointed by the compact administrator in the home state; an individual~~
11 ~~appointed by the compact administrator in the remote state(s) involved; and an individual mutually~~
12 ~~agreed upon by the compact administrators of all the party states involved in the dispute.~~

13 ~~(2) The decision of a majority of the arbitrators shall be final and binding.~~

14 SECTION 2. Sections 5-34.3-7 and 5-34.3-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-34.3
15 entitled "Nurse Licensure Compact" are hereby repealed.

16 ~~**5-34.3-7. Adverse actions.**~~

17 ~~In addition to the provisions described in § 5-34.3-5, the following provisions apply:~~

18 ~~(1) The licensing board of a remote state shall promptly report to the administrator of the~~
19 ~~coordinated licensure information system any remote state actions including the factual and legal~~
20 ~~basis for such action, if known. The licensing board of a remote state shall also promptly report any~~
21 ~~significant current investigative information yet to result in a remote state action. The administrator~~
22 ~~of the coordinated licensure information system shall promptly notify the home state of any such~~
23 ~~reports.~~

24 ~~(2) The licensing board of a party state shall have the authority to complete any pending~~
25 ~~investigations for a nurse who changes primary state of residence during the course of such~~
26 ~~investigations. It shall also have the authority to take appropriate action(s), and shall promptly~~
27 ~~report the conclusions of such investigations to the administrator of the coordinated licensure~~
28 ~~information system. The administrator of the coordinated licensure information system shall~~
29 ~~promptly notify the new home state of any such actions.~~

30 ~~(3) A remote state may take adverse action affecting the multistate licensure privilege to~~
31 ~~practice within that party state. However, only the home state shall have the power to impose~~
32 ~~adverse action against the license issued by the home state.~~

33 ~~(4) For purposes of imposing adverse action, the licensing board of the home state shall~~
34 ~~give the same priority and effect to reported conduct received from a remote state as it would if~~

1 ~~such conduct had occurred within the home state. In so doing, it shall apply its own state laws to~~
2 ~~determine appropriate action.~~

3 ~~(5) The home state may take adverse action based on the factual findings of the remote~~
4 ~~state, so long as each state follows its own procedures for imposing such adverse action.~~

5 ~~(6) Nothing in this compact shall override a party state's decision that participation in an~~
6 ~~alternative program may be used in lieu of licensure action and that such participation shall remain~~
7 ~~non public if required by the party state's laws. Party states must require nurses who enter any~~
8 ~~alternative programs to agree not to practice in any other party state during the term of the~~
9 ~~alternative program without prior authorization from such other party state.~~

10 **5-34.3-11. Immunity.**

11 ~~No party state or the officers or employees or agents of a party state's nurse licensing board~~
12 ~~who act in accordance with the provisions of this compact shall be liable on account of any act or~~
13 ~~omission in good faith while engaged in the performance of their duties under this compact. Good~~
14 ~~faith in this article shall not include willful misconduct, gross negligence, or recklessness.~~

15 SECTION 3. Chapter 5-34.3 of the General Laws entitled "Nurse Licensure Compact" is
16 hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

17 **5-34.3-10.1. Rulemaking.**

18 (a) The commission shall exercise its rulemaking powers pursuant to the criteria set forth
19 in this section and the rules adopted thereunder. Rules and amendments shall become binding as of
20 the date specified in each rule or amendment and shall have the same force and effect as provisions
21 of this compact.

22 (b) Rules or amendments to the rules shall be adopted at a regular or special meeting of the
23 commission.

24 (c) Prior to promulgation and adoption of a final rule or rules by the commission, and at
25 least sixty (60) days in advance of the meeting at which the rule will be considered and voted upon,
26 the commission shall file a notice of proposed rulemaking;

27 (1) On the website of the commission; and

28 (2) On the website of each licensing board or the publication in which each state would
29 otherwise publish proposed rules.

30 (d) The notice of proposed rulemaking shall include:

31 (1) The proposed time, date and location of the meeting in which the rule will be considered
32 and voted upon;

33 (2) The text of the proposed rule or amendment, and the reason for the proposed rule;

34 (3) A request for comments on the proposed rule from any interested person; and

1 (4) The manner in which interested persons may submit notice to the commission of their
2 intention to attend the public hearing and any written comments.

3 (e) Prior to adoption of a proposed rule, the commission shall allow persons to submit
4 written data, facts, opinions and arguments, which shall be made available to the public.

5 (f) The commission shall grant an opportunity for a public hearing before it adopts a rule
6 or amendment.

7 (g) The commission shall publish the place, time and date of the scheduled public hearing.

8 (1) Hearings shall be conducted in a manner providing each person who wishes to comment
9 a fair and reasonable opportunity to comment orally or in writing. All hearings will be recorded,
10 and a copy will be made available upon request.

11 (2) Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring a separate hearing on each rule.
12 Rules may be grouped for the convenience of the commission at hearings required by this section.

13 (h) If no one appears at the public hearing, the commission may proceed with promulgation
14 of the proposed rule.

15 (i) Following the scheduled hearing date, or by the close of business on the scheduled
16 hearing date if the hearing was not held, the commission shall consider all written and oral
17 comments received.

18 (j) The commission shall, by majority vote of all administrators, take final action on the
19 proposed rule and shall determine the effective date of the rule, if any, based on the rulemaking
20 record and the full text of the rule.

21 (k) Upon determination that an emergency exists, the commission may consider and adopt
22 an emergency rule without prior notice, opportunity for comment or hearing, provided that the
23 usual rulemaking procedures provided in this compact and in this section shall be retroactively
24 applied to the rule as soon as reasonably possible, in no event later than ninety (90) days after the
25 effective date of the rule. For the purposes of this provision, an emergency rule is one that must be
26 adopted immediately in order to:

27 (1) Meet an imminent threat to public health, safety or welfare;

28 (2) Prevent a loss of commission or party state funds; or

29 (3) Meet a deadline for the promulgation of an administrative rule that is required by federal
30 law or rule.

31 (l) The commission may direct revisions to a previously adopted rule or amendment for
32 purposes of correcting typographical errors, errors in format, errors in consistency or grammatical
33 errors. Public notice of any revisions shall be posted on the website of the commission. The revision
34 shall be subject to challenge by any person for a period of thirty (30) days after posting. The revision

1 may be challenged only on grounds that the revision results in a material change to a rule. A
2 challenge shall be made in writing, and delivered to the commission, prior to the end of the notice
3 period. If no challenge is made, the revision will take effect without further action. If the revision
4 is challenged, the revision may not take effect without the approval of the commission.

5 **5-34.3-10.2. Oversight, dispute resolution, enforcement and department of health**
6 **obligations.**

7 (a) Oversight.

8 (1) Each party state shall enforce this compact and take all actions necessary and
9 appropriate to effectuate this compact's purposes and intent.

10 (2) The commission shall be entitled to receive service of process in any proceeding that
11 may affect the powers, responsibilities or actions of the commission, and shall have standing to
12 intervene in such a proceeding for all purposes. Failure to provide service of process in such
13 proceeding to the commission shall render a judgment or order void as to the commission, this
14 compact or promulgated rules.

15 (b) Default, technical assistance and termination.

16 (1) If the commission determines that a party state has defaulted in the performance of its
17 obligations or responsibilities under this compact or the promulgated rules, the commission shall:

18 (i) Provide written notice to the defaulting state and other party states of the nature of the
19 default, the proposed means of curing the default or any other action to be taken by the commission;
20 and

21 (ii) Provide remedial training and specific technical assistance regarding the default;

22 (2) If a state in default fails to cure the default, the defaulting state's membership in this
23 compact may be terminated upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the administrators, and all
24 rights, privileges and benefits conferred by this compact may be terminated on the effective date
25 of termination. A cure of the default does not relieve the offending state of obligations or liabilities
26 incurred during the period of default;

27 (3) Termination of membership in this compact shall be imposed only after all other means
28 of securing compliance have been exhausted. Notice of intent to suspend or terminate shall be given
29 by the commission to the governor of the defaulting state and to the executive officer of the
30 defaulting state's licensing board and each of the party states;

31 (4) A state whose membership in this compact has been terminated is responsible for all
32 assessments, obligations and liabilities incurred through the effective date of termination, including
33 obligations that extend beyond the effective date of termination;

34 (5) The commission shall not bear any costs related to a state that is found to be in default

1 or whose membership in this compact has been terminated unless agreed upon in writing between
2 the commission and the defaulting state;

3 (6) The defaulting state may appeal the action of the commission by petitioning the U.S.
4 District Court for the District of Columbia or the federal district in which the commission has its
5 principal offices. The prevailing party shall be awarded all costs of such litigation, including
6 reasonable attorneys' fees.

7 (c) Dispute Resolution.

8 (1) Upon request by a party state, the commission shall attempt to resolve disputes related
9 to the compact that arise among party states and between party and non-party states;

10 (2) The commission shall promulgate a rule providing for both mediation and binding
11 dispute resolution for disputes, as appropriate;

12 (3) In the event the commission cannot resolve disputes among party states arising under
13 this compact:

14 (i) The party states may submit the issues in dispute to an arbitration panel, which will be
15 comprised of individuals appointed by the compact administrator in each of the affected party states
16 and an individual mutually agreed upon by the compact administrators of all the party states
17 involved in the dispute;

18 (ii) The decision of a majority of the arbitrators shall be final and binding.

19 (d) Enforcement.

20 (1) The commission, in the reasonable exercise of its discretion, shall enforce the
21 provisions and rules of this compact;

22 (2) By majority vote, the commission may initiate legal action in the U.S. District Court
23 for the District of Columbia or the federal district where the commission has its principal offices,
24 against a party state that is in default, to enforce compliance with the provisions of this compact
25 and its promulgated rules and bylaws. The relief sought may include both injunctive relief and
26 damages. In the event judicial enforcement is necessary, the prevailing party shall be awarded all
27 costs of such litigation, including reasonable attorneys' fees;

28 (3) The remedies herein shall not be the exclusive remedies of the commission. The
29 commission may also pursue any other remedies available under federal or state law.

30 (e) Data collection - Reporting.

31 (1) Data collection. Commencing in calendar year 2025, Rhode Island employers who
32 employ registered nurses or licensed practical or vocational nurses shall report to the Rhode Island
33 department of health ("RIDOH"), not later than January 30 of each year, the following information
34 and data for the employer, for the period of the immediately preceding calendar year (the "reporting

1 period”):

2 (i) The number of new hires of registered nurses during the reporting period;

3 (ii) The number of new hires of registered nurses who hold multistate licenses and are not
4 licensed in Rhode Island during the reporting period;

5 (iii) The number of new hires of licensed practical nurses and vocational nurses during the
6 reporting period;

7 (iv) The number of new hires of licensed practical nurses and vocational nurses who hold
8 multistate licenses and are not licensed in Rhode Island during the reporting period;

9 (v) The total number of registered nurses employed during the reporting period; and

10 (vi) The total number of licensed practical nurses and vocational nurses employed during
11 the reporting period.

12 (2) Reporting. RIDOH shall annually compile the data received from employers pursuant
13 to subsection (a)(1) of this section and prepare a report that aggregates the information, and
14 disaggregated by new hires and retained employees, for registered nurses, license practical nurses,
15 and vocational nurses, from the results of the data collected pursuant to subsection (e)(1) of this
16 section. This compiled data shall be incorporated into a report which shall be provided to the
17 governor, the speaker of the house, and the president of the senate, not later than March 1 of each
18 year, with the first report due on March 1, 2025.

19 (f) Nurse license fees. RIDOH shall not increase the amount of any licensing fee for
20 registered nurses or a licensed practical nurse or vocational nurse, including, but not limited to,
21 license renewals, for a period of three (3) years commencing on January 1, 2024.

22 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2024, and shall sunset and expire on
23 January 1, 2027.

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LC000290/SUB A
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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT

1 This act would amend the interstate nurse licensure compact and would adopt an enhanced
2 and more comprehensive version of the compact, to allow nurses to hold a multi-state license which
3 would allow them to practice across state lines without having to obtain multiple licenses.

4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2024, and would sunset and expire on January 1,
5 2027.

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LC000290/SUB A
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