



TESTIMONY

January 14, 2020

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF UNILATERAL (OR “UNIVERSAL”) LICENSING RECIPROCITY

By Patrick Ishmael

Testimony Before the House Professional Registration
and Licensing Committee

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE

My name is Patrick Ishmael and I am the director of government accountability at the Show-Me Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan Missouri-based think tank that supports free-market solutions for state policy. The ideas presented here are my own. This testimony is intended to reiterate my views on the concept of unilateral or “universal” licensing reciprocity, and to note long-standing Show-Me Institute research on licensing matters.

Licensing reform is an issue near and dear to the heart of Show-Me Institute researchers. We have been vocal proponents of reducing government barriers to workers, including hair braiders and

electricians, and have written on licensing issues for over a decade. We have also been staunch supporters of expanding the supply of service providers of all stripes through the adoption of some form of interstate licensing reciprocity regime, which would provide greater choice and competition for Missouri consumers.

But as I noted in 2016 in “Demand Supply: Why Licensing Reform Matters to Improving American Health Care,” reciprocity doesn’t have to be a two-way street. In fact, as I wrote in the context of medical professionals, unilateral licensing reciprocity could serve the interests not only of consumers, but of providers as well. As I concluded there:

*While a compact that delivered
doctor licensure reciprocity would*

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*be acceptable, states do not have to wait for such a plan to emerge and **should be willing to accept, unilaterally, the licenses of qualified medical professionals from other states.** Indeed, just as several states have passed Volunteer Health Care Services Acts for the needy, states can pass similar legislation that would allow licensed physicians in good standing to provide care to their own residents—no additional licensing required.*

This logic extends to all professionals licensed at the state level. Momentously in 2019, Arizona passed “universal licensing reciprocity” into law, providing greater acceptance of licenses in good standing from other states unilaterally. House Bill 2046 effectuates a similar outcome by expanding opportunities for Missourians qualified for a profession and licensed in another state, but not licensed here.

Suffice to say, I view this as a very good reform and hope policymakers will give it due consideration, for the sake of consumers and providers alike.

Patrick Ishmael is director of government accountability at the Show-Me Institute.

RESOURCES

Essay “Demand Supply: Why Licensing Reform Matters to Improving American Health Care.” <https://showmeinstitute.org/publication/health-care/demand-supply-why-licensing-reform-matters-improving-american-health-care>

Blog post: “Arizona is Pushing Universal Licensing? Yes Please!” <https://showmeinstitute.org/blog/regulation/arizona-pushing-universal-licensing-yes-please>



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