

Good afternoon Chair Carlson and members of the committee, my name is Doctor Deanna Babb, last name spelled B-A-B-B. I am a doctorate prepared Nurse Practitioner, I own and work as a primary care provider at **Babbcare** Clinic in Great Falls, MT and have provided healthcare to patients in Great Falls and the surrounding community for 42 years. I have been an RN since 1980! And practicing as an APRN since 1999! I am testifying today in opposition to HB 409 on behalf of the Montana Nurses Association, as myself, and as the Chair of the MNA Council on Advanced Practice.

MNA is the recognized leader and advocate for the professional nurse in Montana. MNA is the state professional nurses association representing the voice of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). MNA is our recognized professional organization, which lobbies for nursing practice issues to protect the practice of professional nurses and also protect the public in all areas of health care.

MNA opposes HB 409 **in its current form** due to increased regulatory burdens. This burden is the inclusion of practice hours which is inconsistent with our regulatory rules already in place and inconsistent with the evidence of our professional practice. This inclusion is in direct conflict with the consensus model for APRN regulation. Evidence is clear, APRNs are prepared for safe entry to practice immediately following education/training and certification, and adding an inclusion of minimum practice hours as a requirement for this compact for MT APRNs is unnecessary, burdensome, and creates additional regulatory barriers.

HB 409 does not respect our full practice authority already in place nor improve access or decrease regulatory burdens for our profession. APRNs in MT have had advanced practice since the 1980's and "full practice authority" since the 1990's. This practice is defined as an APRN's ability to utilize knowledge, skills and judgment, to practice to the fullest extent of their education and training, further, competency based education has determined APRNs are prepared to practice the **profession of nursing** upon completion. There should not be added requirements or barriers, therefore adding more regulatory burdens on an APRN just to join the compact. There is **NO** evidence to substantiate, that for over 40 years, we suddenly need additional conditions to care for our communities. Our entry into practice is already supported by law in our current regulations. Now we need practice hours to join a compact? Let's push pause and make sure the compact benefits all of **your MT APRNs**.

This compact would put into law practice hours as a prerequisite for a multistate APRN license. A new burdensome regulation that the compact would require, its non-negotiable, and the compact, once adopted, cannot be **materially changed**, you must adopt the language as is, it is a legally binding document.

The APRN compact has only been passed in three states to date. It doesn't make sense to pass in more states because not all states have passed full independent practice for their APRNs, therefore, those states wouldn't be able to join the compact until that happens.

My understanding is our current administration want less regulatory burden, which we can all appreciate; however, this compact does not meet that goal.

The National AANP (American Assoc. of Nurse Practitioners) of which I am a member, also opposes the compact in its current form as well. Their two opposition points are the inclusion of practice hours (which is a step backward) and the denial for a request for an APRN advisory board to ensure expertise to address the complexity of practice issues. The APRN compact needs to address these two issues for it to be relevant, sought after, and a good thing for our nurses.

With this said, it doesn't mean MNA and my fellow APRNs oppose the APRN compact forever, but the APRN compact needs to be consistent with our current regulatory practice that MT lawmakers and rule makers have already codified. This is detrimental to the profession of advanced practice nursing within our state.

Let's pass the APRN compact when it makes sense for Montana, in its current form it impairs our practice, please vote NO on HB 409.

Chair Carlson, with your permission, I would like to provide you and the committee with the AANP opposition statement, of which our state association is in alignment with, for your review and consideration.

Thank you for your time today, thank you all for serving, and thank you for allowing me to testify today and I will remain to answer any questions if needed.