



Advocacy in Action

A NEWSLETTER OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNSELING ASSOCIATION'S
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Fall/Winter 2022

We enjoyed meeting many of you during the 2022 Pennsylvania Counseling Association Conference and sharing the news about PA legislation that affects our profession.

During the conference, we collected 92 signed letters which we mailed to the appropriate legislators. Many more emails also went out to PA legislators. If you did not have the chance to send a letter then, it's not too late! This newsletter will

- bring you up to speed on the legislation we are focusing on,
- show you how to connect with your legislator, and
- link to sample letters which are ready for you to send.

Choose an issue you really care about, or advocate for all of them. It takes about 5 minutes of time, and together, we can really make a difference!

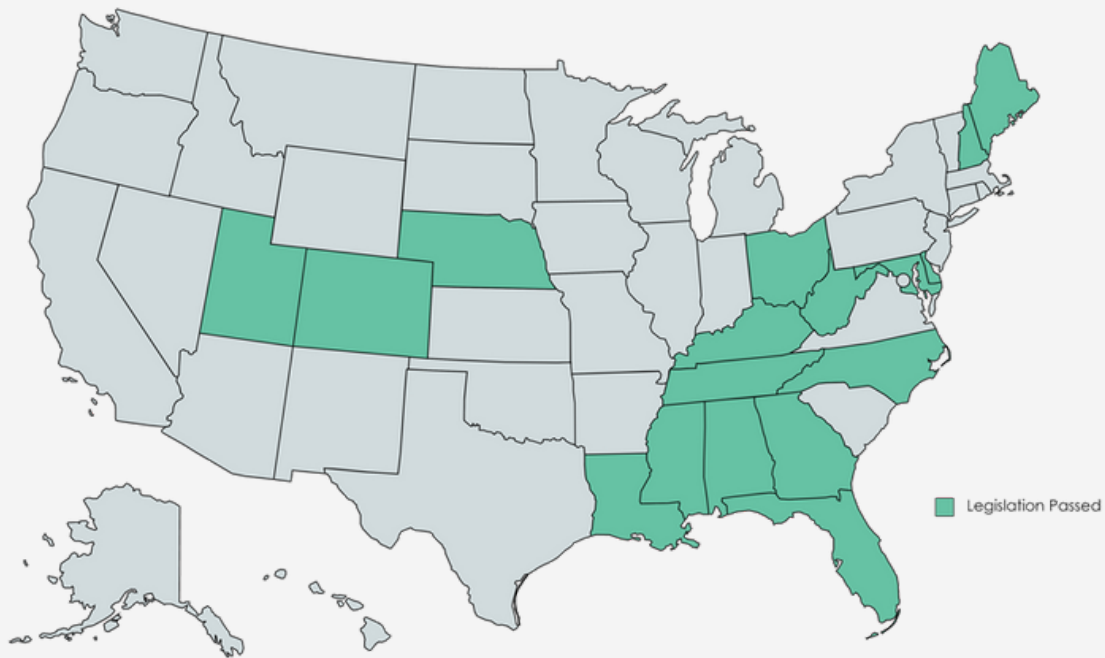
The legislation we are focusing on:

- Interstate Counseling Compact ([learn more](#))
- Ban on conversion therapy for minors in PA ([learn more](#))
- Student loan forgiveness for counselors([learn more](#))

How You Can Help:

- Contact your state legislators and ask them to support adoption of these bills. You can find your State Senators [here](#), and State Representatives [here](#).
- Contact your *Republican* legislators! Why's that? Currently these bills have only Democratic support.
- Send letters! You'll find links to our letter templates on our [Action page](#).





ISSUE #1: PA in the Interstate Counseling Compact

What you need to know:

- The Interstate Counseling Compact gives counselors in member states the opportunity to provide services to clients in those states, which increases access to mental health services.
- Pennsylvania's legislature is considering joining the 17 states that have signed the Compact into law.
- As of October 2022, Pennsylvania lawmakers have introduced bills in the House and Senate, which begins the process of PA joining the Compact.
- This fall, members of participating states who have already passed laws to join the Compact will meet to codify the Compact's rules.
- The Compact may go into effect as soon as early 2023.

For more information about the compact, read our [Summer Newsletter](#).

Support this legislation! Here is a [letter](#) you can send to your legislator. Go to our [Action page](#) to get their contact info!



ISSUE #2: Proposal to Ban Conversion Therapy for Minors in PA

What you need to know:

Governor Wolf signed an executive order banning conversion therapy in places that receive state funding. This executive order is *not* codified law. Pennsylvania still allows the use of conversion therapy.

Two pending bills can change that:

- [House Bill 729](#)
- [Senate Bill 26](#)



Passing these bills would move Pennsylvania more in line with the ACA position on conversion therapy and would protect children in Pennsylvania. These bills have been sitting in committee since March 2021.

[Support this legislation!](#) Here is a [letter](#) you can send to your state legislator. Go to our [Action page](#) to get their contact info!

ISSUE #3: Loan Forgiveness Bill for Mental Health Providers

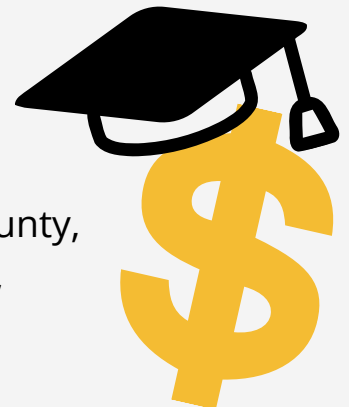
What you need to know:

Two proposed bills are intended to address staff shortages in mental health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorder treatment by paying a portion of professionals' student loans if they join the profession.

1. [House bill 2384](#) for providers of mental health & intellectual disabilities services
2. [Senate bill 94](#) addresses substance use disorder treatment providers

Qualifications to receive loan forgiveness:

- be a Pennsylvania resident,
- possess a two-year, four-year, or graduate degree,
- work full time in a county agency or an agency serving a county,
- work for six months and stay in good standing with agency,
- perform staff duties at that agency,
- have an outstanding student loan balance, and
- agree to work in the field for at least four years.



[Support this legislation!](#) Here's a [letter](#) you can send to your state legislator. Go to our [Action page](#) to find their contact info!

Get Involved! Contact Your Representatives! Tell Your Peers!

legislative advocacy is a professional imperative -- a strong profession means we can provide excellent care to our clients!

SUMMARY OF HOW TO TAKE ACTION:

- Contact your state legislators and ask them to support adoption of these bills. You can find your [State Senators here](#), and [State Representatives here](#).
 - Counseling Compact: [HB 2852](#), [SB 1348](#). See the template letter [here](#).
 - Conversion Therapy Ban: [HB 729](#), [SB 26](#). See the template letter [here](#).
 - Loan Forgiveness: [HB 2384](#), [SB 94](#). See the template letter [here](#).
 - One of the best ways to support this legislation is to contact your *Republican* lawmakers, as these bills currently only have Democratic support. Getting bipartisan support is essential to getting these bills passed!
 - Share this information with your Pennsylvania LPC coworkers, pre-licensed counselors, supervisees and supervisors, students, and other stakeholders! The more support, the better!
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This newsletter comes to you from the PCA Government Relations Committee: Travis Schermer, Maddie Stevens, Scott Baker, Sarah Murphy, and Pat McGowan. Want to learn more or to join our committee? We'd love to **hear from you!**



REACH OUT TO THE PCA GRC!

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