



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony for HB 1006 – Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses
– Temporary Licensure, Certification, and Registration**
Health and Government Operations Committee

Good morning Chair, Vice Chair, and honorable members of the committee, my name is Del. Brian Crosby and it's an honor to present HB 1006, entitled Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary Licensure, Certification, and Registration.

Last year, the Maryland General Assembly unanimously passed HB349, which provided reciprocity to service members, veterans, and military spouses for professional licenses overseen by the Department of Labor so long as an applicant maintained a corresponding license from another state in good standing. Maryland is currently home to approximately 400,000 veterans, 29,000 active-duty members of the armed forces, and 19,000 military spouses. When many of these families move to Maryland, they must rely on two incomes to support their families, as one is simply not enough for our high cost of living. For veterans and spouses who already maintain licenses in other states, the time required to recertify themselves in Maryland can be a lengthy and costly endeavor. This presents a barrier to sustainable employment. Thankfully, we have removed portions of this barrier over the last few sessions, but HB349 only applied to professions managed by the Department of Labor, so there are still some loopholes left to close. HB1006 would extend this reciprocity to professions overseen by the Health Department such as nurses, psychologists, dentists, and optometrists, among others. These are highly-skilled, critical professions for maintaining healthy Marylanders, and we should not prevent experienced medical professionals from practicing in our state.

In addition to the language from last year, we have submitted three amendments for the committee's consideration. First, we expanded the language to include "permits," as some professions such as morticians use that terminology in place of "license" or "certification." Second, we require all applicants to pass a federal background check, or to have passed one within one year of the application date. This further ensures the quality of applicants. Finally, we define proof of identity to ensure uniformity between licensing boards. This would include either a copy of the applicant's DD-214, PCS orders, or Common Access Card, as well as a marriage license for all spousal applications.

As stated earlier, I believe we should make the lives of our military families easier, not harder. This bill expands upon unanimous decisions from this body, and as such, I request a favorable report from the committee. I'm happy to take questions at this time.