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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1482, Military Department – Study on Assisting Active Duty Service Members with State Law and Regulatory Compliance

March 10, 2020

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melynk, and esteemed colleagues. Thank you for allowing me to present my bill to you today.

HB 1482 requires the Department of Commerce working with the Military Department of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs to study and make recommendations regarding State laws and regulations that unnecessarily burden active duty service members. The bill is designed to minimize the burdens placed on Maryland citizens serving on active duty in the 7 Uniformed Services outside of Maryland when they are attempting to comply with Maryland law, regulations, or established procedures of Maryland governmental agencies.

There are two pieces to this legislation. First, the study in this bill will identify burdensome requirements (highlighted below) that negatively impact personnel deployed outside Maryland or overseas. The hope would be that after issuing the report, some of these specific issues could be alleviated with amendments to existing laws, adjustment in policies, elimination of the requirements for active personnel serving outside Maryland, or other remedial actions by the Maryland General Assembly, Executive Department, the Comptroller of Maryland, the Maryland Courts, or other agencies.

Second, the bill creates a study group or convening of involved stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a program to assist active duty service members seeking to comply with State laws and regulations. We envision this program to serve as an “Office of Deployment” or a “navigator helpline” for active duty military and their families. If you have questions, you could call this office and they would assist. While we’ve heard of the need, we’re not sure what this should look like or whether the need truly exists. This convening would help determine if the creation of an office or navigator of this type is necessary.

Additional Background

Active duty status may be generated when an individual enlists, is commissioned, or accepts a warrant in the Uniformed Services. It also is initiated when a member of a Reserve Component Unit (Troop Program Unit) of the Maryland Army or Air Guard is activated, or when an individual member is called to active duty. The same applies to the Reserves in the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, Marines, or the United States Public Health Service (a newly-evolving

reserve component). Sometimes these active duty assignments are long-term (i.e., multi-year). Frequently, large units (or major portions thereof) deploy from their normal duty stations. Also, frequently personnel are sent on active duty for training (ADT), which can be for different periods of time depending on the Service, occupational specialty, category, and other factors. Reserve Component units typically spend Annual Training (AT) at locations other than their home stations, but these sessions generally are of short duration. Finally, Uniformed Services retirees can be recalled to active duty anywhere in the world on orders for various periods of time (usually based on the nature of the requirement or the emergency situation that is prevailing).

Examples of Burdensome Rules and Regulations for Active Duty Personnel

Requirements Based on the Calendar

1. Matters related to the issuance or reissuance (including required changes) of Drivers Licenses/Maryland State Identification Cards/Maryland or County Employee ID Cards;
2. Problems for family members who need to enroll in programs at Maryland schools (due to Permanent Change of Station orders issued outside Maryland) before moving to Maryland and without yet having a Maryland street address (all levels of education);
3. Vehicle inspections (including time required vehicle emission inspections) and registration renewals on a car with a Maryland title but housed outside Maryland (or out of the country) for an extended period;
4. Meeting Maryland's in-person and documentation requirements for the issuance of a REAL ID (based on requirements of Federal law); and
5. Issues related to streamlining absentee voting in either a primary or general election that is not otherwise covered by Federal law and rulings.

Related to Licensing

1. Matters related to initial licensing of the member or a spouse/dependent child – or transferability of licenses not otherwise covered by law;
2. Renewal of permits and licenses related to occupations (or private businesses of members and their spouses/family members);
3. Renewal of local permits to rent or lease property owned in Maryland, where local governments generally maintain jurisdiction;
4. Renewal and updating requirements on licenses or permits (at specific expiration dates or other situations due to changes in data); and
5. Problems for a Maryland resident with a Maryland Home of Record (HOR) but no active/current mailing address in Maryland.

Our active service members deserve our support, assistance, and respect. By lifting unnecessary burdens we allow them to simply concentrate on their duties and responsibilities while they serve our country abroad. I ask for a favorable report for HB 1482.