



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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Committee:	Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Bill Number:	Senate Bill 230
Title:	Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary License, Certifications, Registration, and Permitting
Hearing Date:	February 1, 2022
Position:	Support with Amendment

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 230 – Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses – Temporary License, Certification, Registration and Permitting* with amendments.

Temporary License May Not be Best Solution for Many

The Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice allows for temporary licenses when applicants meet all other requirements but are waiting satisfactory completion of the national exam. This bill would create a new category of temporary licensure for certain members of the military, veterans, or spouses. The temporary license could be up to 6 months.

MOTA is supportive of ensuring that active military members, veterans, and spouses obtain licenses as quickly as possible as long as they meet state licensure requirements. Luckily, Maryland statute already includes a directive for all boards to expedite the licensure applications of these individuals.

In most cases, we think it will actually take longer for an individual to apply for a temporary license and then apply to convert to a permanent license. The report has reported to us that it takes less than 1 week to process a completed application and it's ready for review and approval by the Board at its next meeting. The Board meets monthly so there is not a backlog of applications.

Substantial State Requirements Should Be Met

The bill allows for a board to issue an extended temporary license to an individual does not meet State requirements. We are concerned that someone could be practicing without adequate clinical education or supervision. This could create a risk to the public. Many of the individuals served by occupational therapists are in vulnerable positions, so we think it is particularly important their clinicians meet Maryland standards.

There are some instances where we would support flexibility. For example, an out-of-state military spouse could practice as an occupational therapist while waiting for the next opening in the State-required continuing education requirement.

Striking the Right Balance – Working on Amendments

MOTA would be happy to work with the bill sponsor, the Committee, and other stakeholders on reviewing where there should be more flexibility in licensure. The bill provides for a very solid framework, and we would be happy to work collaboratively on amendments that would preserve the underlying intent of the bill and still maintain critical licensure requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.