



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

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**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF House Bill 383
Cosmetology Licensure Compact
House Economic Matters Committee
January 31, 2024**

Thank you Chair Wilson and members of the House Economic Matters Committee.

As the Secretary of Maryland's Department of Veterans Affairs, I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on Maryland joining the Cosmetology Licensure Compact (House Bill 383). This proposed legislation will empower many Marylanders, especially our military spouses. According to the national non-profit Blue Star Families, military spouse unemployment stands at 21%, an unacceptable level that has been static for too many years. Additionally, 600,000 military and veteran families move around the nation and the world every year, uprooting their lives in service of our country. Many move to Maryland with skills and talents that we should be harnessing.

House Bill 383 enables licensed cosmetologists to continue practicing their skills here in Maryland, provided that they are already licensed in their previous state, and that that state is also part of the compact. This change would have an enormous impact on our military spouses who practice cosmetology, allowing them to seamlessly integrate into our Maryland communities and minimize disruptions to their professional life between moves. Additionally, the Compact could benefit Maryland's fiscal health by ensuring these families are able to thrive economically here in the state.

Military families, like all families, increasingly need to be two-income households in order to thrive and achieve the American Dream. Thriving military families are essential to retaining veterans to continue living here in Maryland. HB 383 goes some way toward making that goal possible.

I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on the Cosmetology License Compact to help our state's military spouses.

Sincerely,

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary