



# MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

January 30, 2024

Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

## **SB 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification – Request for a Favorable Report**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition and as its Communications Director, I am writing in support of SB 221. As a licensed healthcare professional, I know all too well about the time and effort it took every time I had a permanent change of station—hundreds of hours of research, collecting the necessary documents AND paying out hundreds of dollars for a new license.

This bill was requested by the Maryland Department of Health. It authorizes enabling legislation for licensure and certification boards to adopt regulations establishing reciprocity for individuals who are licensed or certified in another state. Its intention is not to compete with compact creation or adoption, but instead to bridge the gap for those professions whose numbers are too small to be eligible for a compact. This legislation improves license portability and employment by reducing the burden of holding multiple licenses. Such license reciprocity may enable employment of persons living in nearby states, and would certainly be welcomed by our service member families.

Maryland is home to 34,444 active-duty service members, 14,292 active-duty spouses and 25,642 reservists/national guard members with 28,019 family members<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there are 355,787 veteran households<sup>2</sup>.

Military spouses have long faced employment challenges, with an unwavering unemployment rate of 22%<sup>3</sup> compared to our local rate of 1.8%. Most spouses need to work. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of active-duty spouses had to leave their last job because of a permanent change of station move<sup>4</sup>. On average, they earn 26.8% less in income than their non-military counterparts because of

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<sup>1</sup> [Military One Source](#), as of December 31, 2022

<sup>2</sup> [VA Claim Insider](#), August 10, 2023

<sup>3</sup> 2021 [DoD Survey of Active-Duty Spouses](#)

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – The Hidden Financial Costs of Military Spouse Unemployment](#)

**SB 221 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification - Favorable**

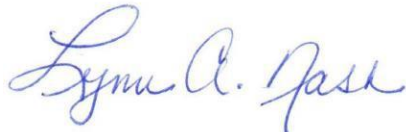
the frequent moves. The average time to find a job for a military spouse is 19 weeks, **OR \$12,374 per year in lost wages** trying to relicense and/or find work in the new state<sup>5</sup>.

The average military family moves every two to three years<sup>6</sup> and for the military spouse it means getting another license before they can work. Here in Maryland, our high cost of living means that for most families, especially for our uniformed service families, having two incomes *is critical*. Time lost seeking a new job and a new occupational license creates economic challenges for our military families, not only in the near term, but the cumulative effect is that they often cannot plan for, save for, and be ready for retirement. Often the difficulty for spouses staying employed is one of the main reasons that service members decide **NOT** to re-enlist.

License reciprocity **improves public access to every occupational category who enacts this legislation**, by reducing overly burdensome and duplicative requirements associated with holding multiple licenses. Reciprocity preserves the regulatory authority of States to protect public health and safety through the current system of State licensure. It lowers expenses and gets the applicant working sooner – a real benefit to our service families.

The Maryland Military Coalition, is a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing 21 veteran service organizations who, in turn, serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families. The Coalition **strongly supports** SB 221 – **Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification** and asks for your **favorable report**.

Respectfully,



Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN  
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service Communications Director

Maryland Military Coalition Member Organizations Follow

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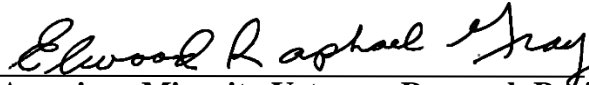
<sup>5</sup> [National Military Family Association Data](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Goldwater Institute, Breaking Down Barriers to Work](#)

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

  
Air Force Sergeants Association

  
American Military Society

  
American Minority Veterans Research Project

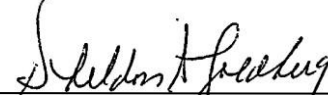
  
Association of the United States Navy


  
Commissioned Officers Association of the  
US Public Health Service

  
Disabled American Veterans

  
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

  
Fleet Reserve Association

  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

  
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'  
Association

  
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

  
Military Officers Association of America

  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

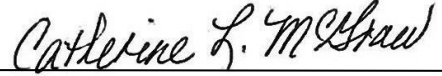
  
Montford Point Marines of America


  
National Association for Black Veterans

  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

  
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

  
Reserve Organization of America

  
Society of Military Widows

  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

  
Veterans of Foreign Wars