



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 1, 2024

Honorable Josline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB 146 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification – Request for a Favorable Report

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition and as its Communications Director, I am providing written testimony in support of HB 146. As a licensed healthcare professional, I am well aware of the burdensome challenge of reapplying for credentials when I made each of my permanent change of station moves—applying took lots of time and money.

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 members¹. In addition, there are 355,787 veteran households².

Military spouses have long faced employment challenges, with an unwavering unemployment rate of 22%³ 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 move⁴. On average, they earn 26.8% less in income than their non-military counterparts because of

¹ [Military One Source](#), as of December 31, 2022

² [VA Claim Insider](#), August 10, 2023

³ 2021 [DoD Survey of Active-Duty Spouses](#)

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

HB 146 – Health Occupations Boards – Reciprocal Licensure and Certification - Favorable

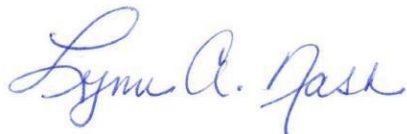
the frequent moves. The average time to find a job for a military spouse is 19 weeks, **OR \$12,374 per year in lost wages** trying to relicense and/or find work in the new state⁵.

The average military family moves every two to three years⁶ and for 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** HB 146 – **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

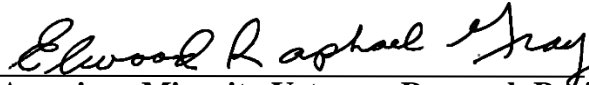
⁵ [National Military Family Association Data](#)

⁶ [Goldwater Institute, Breaking Down Barriers to Work](#)

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association

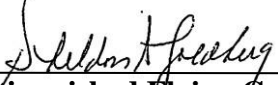

American Military Society


American Minority Veterans Research Project

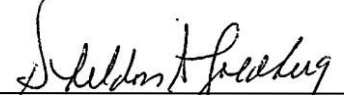

Association of the United States Navy



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

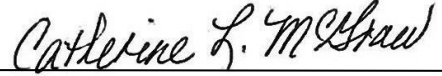

Montford Point Marines of America



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