



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
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**January 29, 2025**

**Maryland General Assembly  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 131  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chairperson**

**Remarks of  
Christopher R. Arnold  
Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison  
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office**

**Support of: House Bill 118**

**Testimony**

Madame chair and honorable members of the Ways and Means Committee, the Department of Defense is grateful for the opportunity to support the policies reflected in House Bill 118, relating to the interstate teacher mobility compact. These policies meet the Department's fullest intent regarding military spouse employment and economic opportunities.

I am Christopher Arnold, the Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison at the United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We represent the Department and establish relationships with state leaders across the country who are concerned for troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. I thank you for the opportunity to address you today and for your support of our service members and their families.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments have made the importance of military spouse licensure explicitly clear as they consider the availability of license reciprocity when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives. This consideration was codified by Congress as a requirement in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.<sup>1</sup> Notably, 10 U.S.C. § 1781(b) note

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<sup>1</sup> **2883. Consideration of certain military family readiness issues in making basing decisions associated with certain military units and major headquarters**

(a) Taking into consideration military family readiness issues

In determining whether to proceed with any basing decision associated with a covered military unit or major headquarters in the United States after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned shall take into account, among such other factors as that Secretary considers appropriate, the military family readiness considerations specified in this section, including those military family readiness considerations specified pursuant to subsection (e).

(b) Interstate portability of licensure and certification credentials

requires the military services to produce annual basing decision scorecards at the state and installation level considering military family readiness issues.<sup>2</sup>

The secretaries must consider “*whether the State in which an installation subject to a basing decision is or will be located ... has entered into reciprocity agreements to recognize and accept professional and occupational licensure and certification credentials granted by or in other States or allows for the transfer of such licenses and certifications granted by or in other States.*”<sup>3</sup>

Congress also provided the Department authority to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments to provide grants to professions in order to develop compact law to be approved by States.<sup>4</sup> In March 2021, the Department provided funding to five professions, and the compact before you today was developed through this process.<sup>5</sup>

Occupational licensure compacts provide consistent rules for licensed members to work in other states. The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact utilizes an equivalent license recognition model that provides compact authorization through a single state license.<sup>6</sup>

In adopting the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, Maryland can increase its pool of highly qualified teachers, addressing the documented teacher shortages being experienced within the state, and support learning for all students.

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With regard to the State in which an installation subject to a basing decision covered by subsection (a) is or will be located, the Secretary of the military department concerned shall take into account the extent to which the State—

- (1) has entered into reciprocity agreements to recognize and accept professional and occupational licensure and certification credentials granted by or in other States; or
- (2) allows for the transfer of such licenses and certifications granted by or in other States.

(h) Basing decision scorecard

(1) Scorecard required

The Secretary of the military department concerned shall establish a scorecard for military installations under the jurisdiction of such Secretary, and for States and localities in which such installations are or may be located, to facilitate taking into account the considerations specified in this section whenever that Secretary makes a basing decision covered by subsection (a).

(2) Update

The Secretary of the military department concerned shall update the scorecard established by that Secretary under this subsection not less frequently than once each year in order to keep the information in such scorecard as current as is practicable.

(3) Availability to public

A current version of each scorecard established under this subsection shall be available to the public through an Internet website of the military department concerned that is accessible to the public.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* (h)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* (b)

<sup>4</sup> 10 U.S.C. §1784 (Public Law 116-120, Section 575).

<sup>5</sup> Through a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments, grants will allow selected professions to work with CSG’s National Center for Interstate Compacts to develop model interstate occupational licensure compact legislation, addressing license portability affecting transitioning military spouses, along with other practitioners in the profession. The five selected professions are teaching, social work, cosmetology, massage therapy, and dentistry/dental hygiene.

<sup>6</sup> <https://teachercompact.org/>

Military spouses are better educated and more trained than their civilian equivalents, yet on average, earn twenty-five percent less than their civilian counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Military spouse teachers holding a compact eligible license can apply for licensure in another member state and receive the closest equivalent license without submitting additional materials, taking state-specific exams, or completing additional coursework.

As our service members and their families move from state to state, obtaining licenses in order to pursue employment is critical. Portable employment opportunities support military spouse career development. Compacts serve to relieve one of the many stressors of a military move.

In addition to supporting the drafting of model compacts laws for professions, 10 § U.S.C. 1784(h) authorizes DoD to support professions with developing database systems to make the compacts more efficient and operational. These database systems allow States to share information about practitioners using compact provisions to work in member States.<sup>8</sup>

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous efforts that the Old Line State has historically made to support our service members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support these policies and grateful to sponsor, Delegate Mireku-North, for their sponsorship and leadership.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these issues. As always, as Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison, I stand ready to assist and answer whatever questions you may have.

Yours etc.,

**CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD**

Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office

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<sup>7</sup> Hiring Our Heroes. *Military Spouses in the Workplace. Understanding the Impacts of Spouse Unemployment on Military Recruitment, Retention and Readiness*. June 2017.

<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Military%20Spouses%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The current effort to develop compacts through a cooperative agreement and to approve compacts is a collaboration- \_ between the federal government, state governments and non-governmental organizations representing professionals and state licensing boards. Through this collaborative effort, all practitioners within a profession will have greater mobility while sustaining the focus on assuring public safety through licensure. This is significant for the military community in that along with active duty military spouses receiving the benefit of compacts, active duty members, members of the reserve component, reserve component spouses, transitioning Service members and other Veterans benefit from the mobility provided through compacts.