

Date: February 17, 2026

Bill number: MD HB420

Dear Chair Wells, Vicechair Kerr, and all distinguished members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this bill. My name is Kihwan Bae, and I am a research fellow at the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University. The center is a non-partisan research group, and this comment is not submitted on behalf of any party or interest groups.

My studies examine a broad range of implications of occupational regulations. One of the studies shows that expedited licensing programs for military spouses improve their labor market outcomes after a relocation across military bases in different states. For example, I found an increase in wage and salary income and a decline in unemployment compensation among military spouse interstate migrants.

As of today, almost all states have an expedited licensing program for military spouses, and some states – including Maryland – also have a similar program for active duty service members, veterans, or veteran spouses. This bill streamlines the existing program for active duty service members and military spouses and extends it for a broader group of veterans and their spouses by removing a one-year post-transfer period restriction for certain occupations, including teaching and health occupations. It is expected to reduce economic burdens among military families upon relocations and increase the provision of education and healthcare services in the Free State.

The bill also includes safeguards to protect public health and safety from unskilled practices: the expedited licensing program only applies to individuals with out-of-states licenses in good standing, and it allows the licensing authority to conduct a criminal history records check prior to authorizing licensed practice.

Taken together, research suggests that expedited licensing for military families is a way to alleviate burdens on military families who sacrificed or is sacrificing for the nation with little harm on public health and safety.

Sincerely,

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