



## EVALUATING STATE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT IMPROVED LICENSURE LAWS

*States have modified licensing requirements in law to support military spouses and transitioning Service members obtaining occupational licenses more quickly.*

**KEY MESSAGE:** State governments have passed laws to support military spouses being able to transfer a license and transitioning Service members to use their military record to obtain a license. The Department has contracted with the University of Minnesota to evaluate occupational board implementation of laws and policies to support military spouses. The Defense – State Liaison Office (DSLO) intends to provide feedback to states on this evaluation and ask for assistance to evaluate licensure improvements for military spouses and transitioning Service members in order to improve overall implementation.



### DISCUSSION POINTS:

- From 2011 – 2016, DSLO addressed licensure issues for military spouses using the common practices of endorsement and temporary licensure in order to address as many occupations through a comprehensive (rather than occupation-specific) approach. DSLO also found that states were willing to institute policies and practices that could expedite the processing of applications for military spouses.
- During the same timeframe, DSLO worked with states to provide overarching legislation to allow/require boards to evaluate military training, education and experience to provide transitioning Service members credit towards achieving an occupational license.
- These initiatives were anticipated as the starting point for boards to modify their policies and practices to accommodate transitioning Service members and military spouses.
  - As an indicator of board implementation of licensing policies modified to support military spouses, DSLO contracted with the University of Minnesota (UoM) during 2017 to review the outcome of state policy changes at the board level.<sup>1</sup>
    - 44% of boards were not accessible on the first attempt. Customer service representatives were most often not aware of the legislation specific to military spouses.
    - Only about 40% of boards had information on websites specific to military spouse license and credential portability.
- The Department of Defense is asking state policymakers to assess the actions of licensing boards to encourage implementation of changes to laws and regulatory policy.

“Interviews of occupational board staff revealed that most staff directed researchers to the website to find answers to questions about transfer of licenses and credentials. However, majority of the websites did not contain information about processes of transfer specific to military spouses. Further, most applications for license and credential transfers did not contain questions that allowed spouses to indicate their military status.”<sup>2</sup>

“Department of Health and Department of Labor regulating authorities must report on their efforts to implement the above legislation modifying professional licensing procedures for military spouses and veterans:

- in a biennial report to the Legislature;
- in an annual report to the Military Transition Council; and
- annually before the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UoM evaluated the actions taken by six boards in each of the 50 states to indicate the level of implementation of the revised laws (Occupational Therapy, Dental Hygiene, Massage Therapy, Mental Health Counseling, Cosmetology and Real Estate were reviewed).

<sup>2</sup> The Center of Research and Outreach, University of Minnesota, “Military Spouse Licensure Portability Examination,” page 8

<sup>3</sup> Final Bill Report, Synopsis as Enacted, Washington Senate Bill 5359, 2017