



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

February 8, 2023

Senator Michael Dembrow
Chair, Senate Committee on Education
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Dembrow,

On behalf of the Department of Defense, thank you for considering SB 183, legislation which improves the quality of life for military families. Oregon is home to 2,622 active-duty service members, 11,778 National Guard and reserve members, and over 10,000 military connected children.

In the shadow of decades of overseas conflict, Oregon's military continues to maintain an operational tempo that requires consistent support. Recent mobilizations to support COVID response, a year-long deployment to support Operation Atlantic Resolve, and on-going readiness training highlight that Oregon military families remain on the forefront of serving our nation.

Supporting military families ensures that a service member can remain focused on their mission. In September 2021, the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden released the following statement in her Joining Forces Report, *"The families of our service members and veterans, caregivers, and survivors ... may not wear a uniform ... but they sacrifice for us all. They give their best to the United States, and we owe them nothing but our best in return."*¹

By establishing a statewide Purple Star schools program, Oregon can encourage local education agencies to implement practices that assist military children with transitions/deployments and also recognize military service and civic responsibility. For those schools already providing this cultural competency the program is a way to show appreciation for these efforts.

K-12 education is one of the greatest family concerns for military members. Whether they are transitioning to a new school from another state or preparing to deploy from their hometown, military members can be reassured that a Purple Star school is ready to support their child.

¹ https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Strengthening_Americas_Military_Families.pdf

SB 183 addresses two additional key quality of life issues for our military families:

- Modifying the definition of armed forces in state law to include Space Force. Recent force structure changes require updates to ensure that states' definitions of military service comport with federal law. States can minimize disruptions in benefits and services for eligible service members and dependents by clearly defining "armed forces."
- Ensuring that military spouses and domestic partners receive a temporary occupational license *or response* within 30-days of application. This policy provides a specific timeline for a board action or response.

In closing, the Department of Defense is grateful for the tremendous support that Oregon has historically made to support military members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support the addition of the Purple Star schools program. Thank you to Senator Manning and the Senate Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness for bringing this bill forward.

Please contact me at Tammie.L.Perreault.Civ@mail.mil or (571) 424-8264 if you have any questions about our support of this policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tammie L. Perreault". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tammie L. Perreault
Northwest Regional Liaison
(AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
Defense-State Liaison Office