



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ motamembers.org

Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affair
Bill: SB 938 - Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses
Temporary Licensure, Certification, and Registration
Hearing Date: March 16, 2021
Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 938 – Health Occupations – Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses Temporary Licensure, Certification, and Registration* with an amendment. We support a more streamlined licensure processes to ease the transition of military members, military spouses, and veterans. We hope that *SB 139 – Interstate Occupational Therapy Compact* helps address the issue, although we recognize not every military member, military spouse, or veteran will be from a compact state. SB 938 would close the gap through temporary licensure for those individuals from states that are not in the compact but have substantially equivalent licensure requirements.

We are concerned about the provision requiring Boards to issue temporary licensees for applicants from states without substantially equivalent requirements. Licensure standards protect patient safety by ensuring health care practitioners are competent and safe to practice. The bill would require a board to waive those requirements – potentially for an extended period of time while the individual takes coursework or even obtains a higher degree. In the meantime, practitioners would be treating Maryland patients without meeting Maryland standards. This arrangement is not fair to the Maryland patients or the practitioners – who may be compromising their future by practicing beyond their competency level. While the bill does allow a board to deny a license based on public safety concerns, we find this language impractical. A board does not have the independent means of determining if someone is competent. They must rely on ensuring the applicant has met the requirements for education and clinical experience.

Based on these concerns, we request the following amendment:

On page 4, strike in entirety lines 19 down through line 2 on page 5.

We ask for a favorable report with the amendment. If we can provide further assistance, please contact Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.