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RESERVE AFFAIRS

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

**February 25, 2021**

**Delegate Shane Pendergrass**  
**Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee**

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

**Support of: HB970 - Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact**

**Testimony**

Madame Chair and honorable committee members, the Department of Defense expresses its support for the policy changes proposed in Maryland HB0970, the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PsyPACT), which addresses licensing issues affecting our service members and their families. I would like to thank you for considering this issue in the 2021 session.

My name is Christopher Arnold. I am the northeast region liaison at the DoD-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 our troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. These are identified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the National Guard Bureau as areas where states can play a crucial role.

A 2018 study by the Federal Trade Commission, "Options to Enhance Occupational License Portability," recognized there are two approaches to alleviating barriers to license portability. Namely, mutual recognition, which relates to occupational compacts, and expedited licensure, which encompasses expedited exemption approaches.<sup>1</sup>

Occupational licensure compacts provide consistent rules for licensed members to work in other states. Common misinformation about compacts is that they either lower or raise the standards for the occupation, when in fact, compact states have the option to issue a "compact license" and also a "State-only license" to maintain their State's standards.

In 2018, the secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air force issued a policy memorandum to the national governor's association noting they "will consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives."<sup>2</sup>

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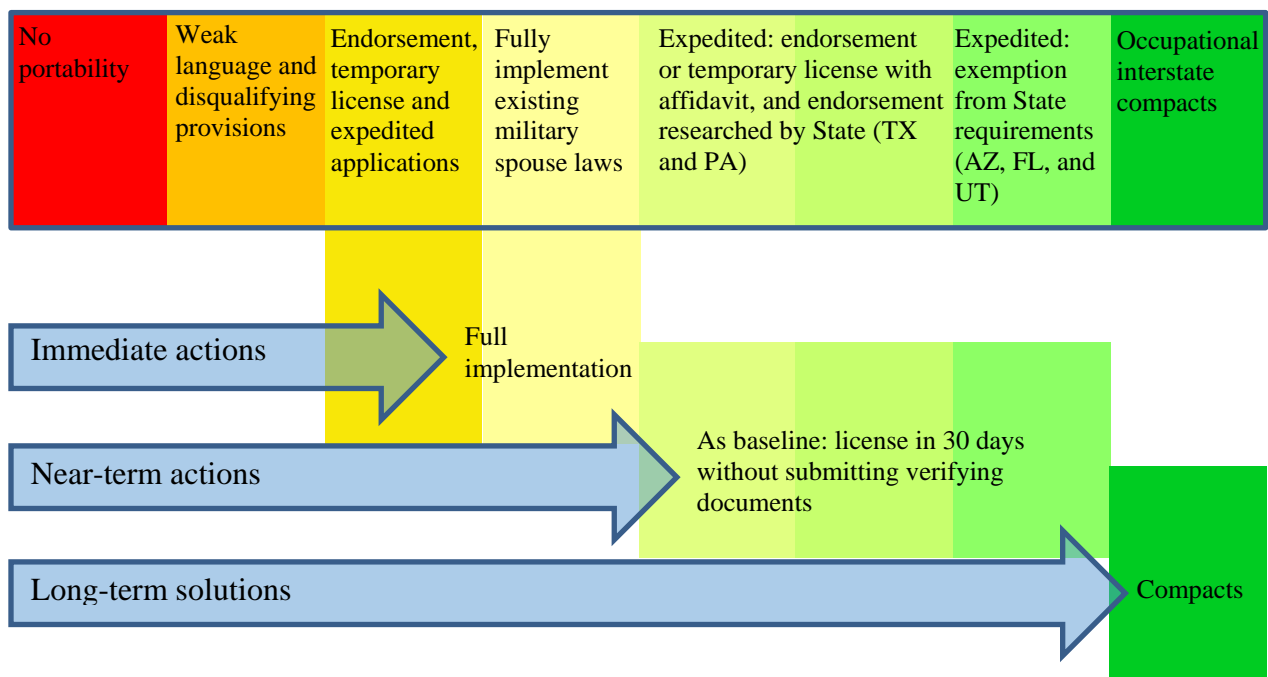
<sup>1</sup> Karen A. Goldman. "Options to Enhance Occupational License Portability." Federal Trade Commission. September 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.ftc.gov/policy/reports/policy-reports/commission-and-staff-reports>

<sup>2</sup> Appendix A.

The Air Force’s approved criteria assesses states’ policies for accepting professional licenses for psychologists as part of its strategic basing process.<sup>3</sup> Future air force basing decisions made with a consistent framework will ensure optimal conditions for service members and their families.<sup>4</sup>

Occupational licensure has been an enduring problem for military spouses. Obtaining a license in a new State can be both time consuming and expensive, and military spouses often cannot adequately anticipate how to prepare for licensure in a new State due to the unpredictable nature of military moves. The short duration of military assignments, coupled with lengthy relicensing processes, can discourage military spouses from seeking relicensure, causing them to quit an occupation or causing military families to leave the military.

Complicating matters further, the term “reciprocity” is used differently among the States. The continuum of reciprocity related programs is represented graphically below. The continuum goes from red, representing little to no portability, to dark green, representing the DoD’s optimum state of full reciprocity. Understanding that military spouses need assistance now, and that many States have already committed to a variety of approaches, the Department advocates that States should pursue multiple approaches to reciprocity simultaneously. Available alternatives can be categorized as being more immediately attainable, achievable within the near-term, or obtainable in the long-term:



<sup>3</sup> Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs. “Department of the Air Force to consider military family support measures in future basing decisions.” February 24, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2092427/department-of-the-air-force-to-consider-military-family-support-measures-in-fut/>

<sup>4</sup> The Air Force developed two types of analytic frameworks. The public education framework is used to evaluate public school districts’ educational aspects and ability to support transferring military children in prekindergarten through 12th grade near Air Force installations through issues such as advance enrollment, Purple Star schools and virtual schools. The licensure portability framework is used to assess state laws, governors’ executive orders, state Supreme Court or bar association rules and the ability for an area to accommodate licenses earned from other locations.

Military spouses are a cross-section of the American population, although a greater percentage of them are in licensed occupations than their civilian counterparts,<sup>5</sup> and they are significantly more mobile.<sup>6</sup> States have committed to using interstate compacts, which establish common understanding of competency and its measurement within the occupation, to resolve the interstate issue of license portability.

Approved in February 2015 by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) Board of Directors, PsyPACT has been created to facilitate telehealth and temporary in-person, face-to-face practice of psychology across jurisdictional boundaries. Under PsyPACT, a psychologist can obtain an E.Passport to practice telepsychology and/or conduct temporary in-person, face-to-face practice. A a doctoral degree in psychology is required to obtain the E.Passport.<sup>7</sup>

PsyPACT is of dual benefit, in that it not only expands access to care for military services members, but also allows military spouses who are practicing psychologists to conduct interstate practice via telehealth or in person. To date, 15 states have joined PsyPACT and 14 states currently have legislation pending in addition to Maryland. This compact is designed to achieve the following purposes and objectives:

- Increase public access to professional psychological services by allowing for telepsychological practice across state lines as well as temporary in-person, face-to-face services into a state which the psychologist is not licensed to practice psychology;
- Enhance the states' ability to protect the public's health and safety, especially client/patient safety;
- Encourage the cooperation of Compact States in the areas of psychology licensure and regulation;
- Facilitate the exchange of information between Compact States regarding psychologist licensure, adverse actions and disciplinary history;
- Promote compliance with the laws governing psychological practice in each Compact State; and
- Invest all Compact States with the authority to hold licensed psychologists accountable through the mutual recognition of Compact State licenses.

Military spouses are far more educated and trained than their civilian counterparts, yet on average, earn 25 percent less than their civilian counterparts.<sup>8</sup> Portable employment

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<sup>5</sup> 34 percent of active duty spouses self-identified as needing a State issued license to work (2017 Survey of Active Duty (Active Component) Spouses, Tabulations of Responses; Office of People Analytics Report No. 2018-006, May 2018), compared to 30 percent of the civilian population (The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institute, [https://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/percent\\_of\\_occupations\\_requiring\\_a\\_license\\_by\\_state](https://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/percent_of_occupations_requiring_a_license_by_state))

<sup>6</sup> "Military spouses are 10 times more likely to move across State lines than their civilian counterparts," "Supporting Our Military Families: Best Practices for Streamlining Occupational Licensing Across State Lines," U.S. Department of Treasury and U.S. Department of Defense, February 2012, page 7.

<sup>7</sup> The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards *PSYPACT FAQs*. Retrieved from [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.asppb.net/resource/resmgr/PSYPACT\\_Docs/PSYPACT\\_FAQs.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.asppb.net/resource/resmgr/PSYPACT_Docs/PSYPACT_FAQs.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Hiring Our Heroes. *Military Spouses in the Workplace. Understanding the Impacts of Spouse Unemployment on Military Recruitment, Retention and Readiness*. June 2017. Retrieved form <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Military%20Spouses%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf>

opportunities support military spouse career development. PsyPACT allows an active duty service member, or their spouse, to designate a home state where the individual has a current license in good standing. This state then serves as the individual's home state for as long as the service member is on active duty, while adhering to the laws, rules and scope of practice in Maryland.

The Department is committed to improving license portability for military spouses. The Secretary of Defense has established military spouse employment as a key aspect of supporting military families, and the Secretaries of the Military Departments have also expressed the importance of military spouse licensure by making it part of the consideration for future mission basing. A 2015 DoD Office of Economic Adjustment Study found the value of defense spending in Maryland to be \$20.5 billion, fourth highest in the nation, which represents or 5.7% of the State GDP.<sup>9</sup>

The Department encourages States to engage in immediate actions to fully implement military spouse licensure laws, near-term actions to at least attain a baseline of getting military spouses a license in 30 days based on minimal documentation, and long-term solutions for reciprocity through compacts. How fast these actions and solutions can be approved and implemented is up to the States.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous efforts that Maryland has historically made to support our military members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support the passage of HB970 and the enactment of PsyPACT and are especially grateful to the Delegate Johnson for introducing this important piece of legislation. Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Yours etc.,

**CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD**  
Northeast Region Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office

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<sup>9</sup> Jennifer Schultz. "Military's Impact on State Economies." *National Conference of State Legislatures*. April 9, 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/military-and-veterans-affairs/military-s-impact-on-state-economies.aspx>

## APPENDIX A

Office of the Secretary of the Navy  
1051 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-1051

Office of the Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Office of the Secretary of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

FEB 23 2018

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: Consideration of Schools and Reciprocity of Professional Licensure for Military Families in Future Basing or Mission Alternatives

Thank you for your support of our men and women in the military. We are often asked what communities can do to support those who serve. While focus on the mission is always our priority, the factors military families cite most frequently as drawbacks to military service include military dependent's difficulty assimilating into local school systems following a duty station transfer, the quality of schools available for their children, and the ability of spouses to obtain jobs and sustain careers. With that in mind, we will encourage leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.

Military families relocate frequently. The services endeavor to schedule transfers to minimize impact on the academic year, but this is not always possible. As a result, incoming students face difficulties transferring credits between school systems, adjusting to varied curriculum, and joining sports teams or clubs after the start of the school year. Exclusion from extra-curricular activities is particularly challenging for our military children, as they are critical to social development and self-esteem. Some school systems recognize this and accommodate military families during transfers. These schools should be commended and emulated.

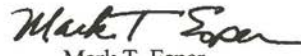
Facilitating military spouses in continuing their work in a new place of residence without delays or extra expense is also important. Spouses in professionally licensed fields such as medical, legal, engineering, education, accounting, or the cosmetic arts face challenges due to delays or cost of transferring licenses to a new state or jurisdiction. Eliminating or mitigating these barriers will improve quality of life for our military families, and ease the stress of transferring duty stations with consideration for long-term career implications.

We realize improving schools and changing laws or regulations regarding professional licensure will take time. Over the long term, however, leaders who want to make a difference for the military and our missions will make the most impact if we focus on what matters. Reciprocity on licensure and the quality of education matter.

Thank you for your help and attention. We look forward to continuing to work with you and thank you again for your support of our men and women in the military.



Richard V. Spencer  
Secretary of the Navy



Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of the Army



Heather Wilson  
Secretary of the Air Force