

JOINT BASE ANDREWS TESTIMONY FOR MARYLAND BILL HB 112 – Health Occupations Temporary

Licensure

TWO MINUTES ALLOWED FOR TESTIMONY

Good Afternoon Mister Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee.

I am Colonel Tyler Schaff, commander of the 316th Wing and the installation commander for Joint Base Andrews. Today I am joined by Col Rodney Jorstad, deputy commander of our 316th Medical Group, and Capt Owen Caron, one of our trauma and emergency nurses.

Joint Base Andrews and the United States Air Force welcome the opportunity for our military member, veteran, and military spouse healthcare professionals to obtain expedited licenses for them to provide healthcare support at state and local community healthcare facilities. Provision of expedited licenses by the state's Health Boards creates a win-win-win scenario. Firstly, our military member healthcare professionals will be able to work in a greater variety of healthcare areas that will help increase their experience and improve their military readiness that will help them meet our National Security requirements while they are deployed. Secondly, our military spouses and veterans will have greater opportunities to work in their chosen fields leading to increased employment, job satisfaction, and improved integration within the local community. Lastly, the addition of qualified and licensed military-oriented healthcare professionals in the state of Maryland will help provide state and local community healthcare facilities with increased flexibility to mitigate potential or existing staffing shortages.

The Air Force and Joint Base Andrews welcomes Maryland's membership in the increased number of interstate compacts it recently joined that involve healthcare and other professions as a means to

enhance license portability for military members, veterans, and military spouses. However, while compact membership provides a positive step forward, we recognize that not all 50 states participate in every compact, which can diminish their positive impact on our military members, veterans, and military spouses who move to Maryland on military orders and have valid licenses in states not within the compact. This issue demonstrates again the importance of the HB 112 Bill to expedite licenses for our military-related healthcare professionals.

Col Rodney Jorstad and Captain Owen Caron will now provide firsthand overviews of how this legislation will improve the ability for our military members, veterans, and military spouses to obtain licenses faster based upon current needs.

COL JORSTAD

Good afternoon. I am Col Rodney Jorstad and my team and I have been monitoring this issue and working on ways to improve license portability for our military healthcare professionals. This new legislation will help alleviate some of the roadblocks our military members, veterans, and military spouses have experienced in the past and it appears that it will provide them with greater opportunities to support the state and local healthcare organizations in our local communities. From a military member perspective on Joint Base Andrews, our Malcolm Grow Medical Clinics and Surgery Center is an ambulatory surgery center and does not support trauma patients, acute care surgery, or inpatient services. To ensure our military healthcare professionals maintain the medical skills needed to support our nation's critical wartime and humanitarian contingency functions while deployed, we rely on civilian partnerships with healthcare organizations in our local community.

Building a community partnership, Joint Base Andrews established a Training Affiliation Agreement with the University of Maryland Prince George's County Medical Center, the second busiest trauma center in Maryland, for a variety of military healthcare professionals to obtain initial, proficiency, and readiness skills training. However, current State law drives enhanced licensing requirements that incur expensive fees for all medical professionals practicing at the Medical Center resulting in limited readiness value for the military healthcare professionals at Joint Base Andrews. For example, fully integrating key Joint Base Andrews medical staff, under the current legislation, would require an estimated total biannual cost of \$50K in state licensing fees, more than 1000 man-hours of time to complete Maryland licensure requirements, and result in onboarding delays for Joint Base Andrews personnel between three and 12 months. During the current license approval timeline, a military healthcare professional will likely be deployed to an operational theater that would result in further delays. We look forward to this new legislation helping to mitigate any existing delays.

Captain Owen Caron will now provide a personal perspective on military healthcare professional and military spouse licensing issues within Maryland.

CAPT CARON

Good afternoon. I am Captain Owen Caron and I have a unique perspective of healthcare licensing based on my experience in numerous states, the last being Alaska. I was also tasked to lead a critical care medical team to Guam on 48 hours' notice to assist the island's medical organizations during this pandemic. My entire team, technicians, nurses, and doctors, were granted temporary licenses within five days of notification. Also, my wife, who is a civilian Nurse Practitioner, and I both find it important to give back to the nation as well as the local community we serve and live in. Getting licensed in the local state, even having licenses and certifications from around the nation, has an immediate and direct

positive impact on my ability to increase my experience and military readiness when called upon to deploy to operational areas or support state and local community efforts during the pandemic. My wife was able to work in her chosen profession, which improved her overall well-being, increased her ability to feel an integral part of the local community, and allowed her to provide support to our family. The ability for military spouses to find work during and after a permanent change of station, where military families are moved from one community to another, serves to enhance the military experience and decrease the stress, anxiety, and frustration that a move can foster.

After arriving at Joint Base Andrews, my wife and I attempted to obtain licenses to work in Maryland but the process proved detrimentally slow and time-consuming, which for a family in need of a dual income does not portend to a positive experience. The Maryland process, from beginning to finish, took us over eight months, numerous telephone calls of getting put on hold for up to six hours only to be disconnected, and more than one visit to the physical office to try and alleviate some roadblocks of emails and phone calls. However, my wife was able get licensed in a neighboring state that has a more timely process, 14 days to be exact.

Thank you and I will now defer to Col Scaff for final remarks.

COL SCHAFF

Thank you for the opportunity for Joint Base Andrews to provide testimony for this very important and positive bill. As a closing thought, I bring to your attention that while the 2021 Air Force Licensure Assessment in support of Air and Space Force families noted Nursing license portability as green, other healthcare-related professions continue to be rated yellow for license portability due to the current state statutes containing barriers to licensure and certification portability for military spouses who continue to have trouble with obtaining a license to work in Maryland. We look forward to a successful

outcome for this bill HB 112 that provides expedited licenses for our military member, veteran, and military spouse healthcare professionals.