

**Association of Defense Communities**  
**Testimony on House Bill 112 before the Maryland General Assembly**  
**20 January 2022**

The Association of Defense Communities (ADC) appreciates the opportunity to testify on House bill 112, which we support. ADC builds resilient communities that support America's military. We are the connection point for leaders from communities, states, the military, and industry on community-military issues by enhancing knowledge, information sharing, and best practices. With nearly 300 communities, states, regions, and affiliated industry organizations, ADC represents every major defense community/state in the nation.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has said that the cornerstone of the new National Defense Strategy will be integrated deterrence, of which two key concepts will be innovation and partnership. As DOD embraces this new strategy it essential that we strengthen the foundation of our military – the places where our military trains, deploys from and calls home – our installations and defense communities. It is here that we must begin to institutionalize the concepts of innovation and partnership. ADC believes that when communities and the military are working as one, we make a difference, we find new solutions and we strengthen networks, and we build great places for our servicemembers and their families to call home.

ADC believes that House Bill 112 is consistent with that vision. This bill supports our vision to build "strong communities that support America's military in every defense community/state in the nation." We cannot emphasize enough the importance of licensing reciprocity for active-duty service members, veterans, and military spouses. As mentioned in the revisions to reciprocity requirements, Maryland is home to nearly 19,000 military spouses. That is an enormous number of people who deserve an efficient licensing reciprocity process to provide for their families and continue serving their nation through professional careers.

In 2018 the then Secretaries of Army, Air Force and Navy wrote to the National Governors Association outlining their desire to have states work closely with the Department of Defense to address a number of quality-of-life challenges. One such challenge was the issue of license reciprocity for military spouses. In the letter they state, "Facilitating military spouses in continuing their work in a new place of residence without delays or extra expense is also important...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."

Further, the service secretaries indicated that they would take a number of these quality-of-life issues and include their consideration in future basing decisions. As such, the Department of Defense has developed, and continues to refine, a tool that assesses a score to each installation as to how they comply with

license reciprocity goals. If a state does not have easy license reciprocity processes that can hurt the military installations score when determining a future basing decision. In 2020 and 2021 the Department of Air Force released the quality-of-life score matrix. For Air Force installations in Maryland, they scored the key reciprocity areas as yellow with the exception of law and nursing. In short, there are additional steps needed to get Maryland into the green thus improving future scores.

House Bill 112 addresses these deficiencies and puts Maryland on the path to improving their quality-of-life scores within the Department of Defense. ADC has prided itself on being a resource for states, local governments, and defense communities across the country. We appreciate that the State of Maryland, which is an important member of our organization, is taking these steps to address a concern raised by the Department of Defense. ADC recognizes that Maryland is home to many significant military installations, particularly installations important in the test and evaluation of new DoD capabilities.

Licensing reciprocity is one of the many steps the state legislature can take to ensure less burden for service members, veterans, and military spouses looking to settle down in Maryland. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our military and their families that gave so much to defend our nation.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to testify and stand ready to continue to support the State of Maryland.