



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

MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

March 3, 2020

The Honorable James J. Maroney  
The Honorable Michael D'Agostino  
Co-Chairs, Committee on General Law  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3500  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: SB13 – An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity in Licensed Occupations

Chairpersons Maroney and D'Agostino and Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense, I am writing to provide support for the policy changes proposed in SB 13, a bill that proposes to include language in Connecticut statute regarding the process for military spouses to apply for an occupational or professional license.

My name is Harold Cooney and I am the Northeast Regional Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy. Our mission is to be a resource to state policymakers as they work to address quality of life issues of military families.

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.

Recently, the Secretary of Defense sent letters to the governors of all 50 states urging them 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.

This included a report to Members of Congress that chronicles the collaborative effort between the Department and States to alleviate licensure barriers, provides an analysis of policies that can eliminate delays and burdens, and provides a way ahead for the Department to work with States. Through their actions, States have shown that they continue to be interested in making improvements in licensure policy to assist military spouses.

Connecticut has never passed spouse licensure legislation. Our assessment has been your regulations regarding reciprocity/endorsement, temp licenses and processing time, are reasonable for all applicants. These temporary licensing and endorsement practices may be sufficient for the usual tempo of interstate mobility, but have proven inadequate for military spouses.

Proposed language in SB13, specifically Section 8, provides language regarding reciprocity/endorsement in keeping with our desired outcomes. It requires a license to be issued to a military spouse licensed in another state, who is in good standing, completes such examination as required, satisfies a background check and pays appropriate fees.

We would urge Connecticut to consider establishing a yearlong temporary license (or 180 days with an additional 180 days if necessary to complete State requirements), and issue the temporary license based upon the application, without including verifying documents, but including an affidavit attesting to the completeness and accuracy of the information included in the application along with a commitment to provide documents by a prescribed date.

Additionally, we advocate Connecticut consider interstate compacts for licensure as an efficient way of providing reciprocity for all practitioners coming to Connecticut.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous efforts that Connecticut has historically made to support our military members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to provide support for the policy changes reflected in SB13 and are especially grateful to Senator Looney 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.

Sincerely,



Harold E. Cooney  
Northeast Regional Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(Military Community and Family Policy)

CC: Senator Martin M. Looney