

April 24, 2023

The Honorable Mike Rogers
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on
Appropriations, Defense Subcommittee
2205 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Chairman Calvert:

We represent the leading military family and veterans organizations in the United States and are writing today to urge you to support appropriations to implement the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2022.

We appreciate Congress' efforts to address employment challenges among military spouses, which help ensure military readiness and protect national security. The Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act, included in the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022, is a signal to thousands of military spouses working in licensed or credentialed fields.

Military spouses bear an enhanced burden compared to civilians in the labor market because of the military lifestyle.

According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Department of Defense, 35 percent of military spouses in the labor force worked in occupations requiring a license or certification. Military families relocate 10 times more often than civilian families, on average every 2-3 years, according to CNN. The military spouse unemployment rate has been about 22 percent since the early 2010s (with the exception of the pandemic when unemployment rose to 38%, according to research from the Hiring Our Heroes program (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

Many states have also attempted to alleviate these burdens; however, the patchwork nature of the laws, along with the lack of an implementation structure, means that many military spouses will continue to struggle transferring their credentials. Federal appropriations directed to states through directed grants will allow the states to hire the support personnel necessary to facilitate the provisions of the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act.

Federal appropriations will ensure that the burden of implementing the provisions of the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act is not foisted onto military spouses, who are already juggling family requirements and their service members' job responsibilities. States will be able to enact the requirements of the law, attract necessary talent to fields that are experiencing labor shortages, and ensure military families are supported, thereby advancing national security. You have the opportunity to end the confusing, time-consuming, and costly path currently required for transferring a license that overburdens our nation's military families.

We urge you to act during this session to support our nation's All-Volunteer Force and provide military spouses with the opportunity to thrive in their chosen fields.

Sincerely,

America's Warrior Partnership
Armed Services YMCA of the USA

Blue Star Families
Cohen Veterans Network
D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families
Hope For The Warriors
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
MAZON: A Jewish Response Hunger
Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
Military Family Advisory Network
Military Officers Association of America
Military Spouse Advocacy Network (MSAN)
Nation's Finest
Operation Homefront
Partners in PROMISE
Psycharmor
RallyPoint
Student Veterans of America
The Gold Standard
The World War II Foundation
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
Tricare for Kids Coalition
U.S. Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce
United Through Reading
USAA
Veterans Health & Wellness Foundation
Vets' Community Connections (VCC)
Vets' Community Connections
Women Veterans and Families Network (WVFN)

cc:

U.S. Representative Adam Smith, U.S. House Committee on Armed Services, Ranking Member
U.S. Representative Betty McCollum, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee, Ranking Member
U.S. Senator Tim Kaine
U.S. Representative Mike Garcia