

March 12, 2019

Senate Labor & Commerce Committee  
Senator Lora Reinbold, Chair  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 427  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee:

As the former co-chair of the Veterans' Caucus, I was the sponsor of HB 28 in 2011, which established the Military Spouse Courtesy License Program, which Senate Bill 11 seeks to improve.

In 2011, HB 28 was introduced with the help of the U.S. Department of Defense, who helped my office craft the language. One of the reasons I introduced the bill was because as a veteran, I knew the importance and need of having family with you when you are transferred to a new base while serving the nation. As the Afghanistan and Iraq wars continued for nearly a decade at that time, we had heard from Alaska-based service members that it was very expensive for their spouses to come to Alaska with them. The members of the Veterans' Caucus saw this bill as an opportunity to ensure spouses of service members could get to work quickly, making it more affordable for the whole family to be transferred to Alaska.

Senate Bill 11 seeks to ensure this program works as intended. I appreciate the great work of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to implement HB 28, but agree there is more work to be done. I believe that a reporting mechanism would put Alaska on par with other states with similar programs in place and improve the communication between military installations, local communities, legislators, the State of Alaska and the U.S. Department of Defense so military families are clear on the opportunities provided to them to have a good quality of life while serving in Alaska.

Please accept my full support of Senate Bill 11. Thank you for your consideration of this bill and your service to the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,



Bill Thomas  
Former Alaska State Representative, Haines