

Alaska State Legislature

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Serving Rural Mat-Su

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Sponsor Statement House Bill 169 version A Worker Freedom Act 2-25-2020

HB169 adds language to state statute that waives initial occupational licensing fees for members of low-income families, veterans and military members, and their spouses.

It is a hardship for low-income families to come up with the up-front costs associated with gaining an occupational license that permits them to work. Removing this initial barrier to entry is a vital element in increasing their economic well-being and standard of living. Active duty servicemembers and their families are required to move from one state to another frequently. Having already paid the upfront costs associated with gaining an occupational license and entry into a profession, it is an undue hardship for us to require them to pay the upfront costs of initial licensing and gaining entry to a profession a second time. Further, the transition of military veterans from the military to civilian life is often difficult. HB169 eases that transition by reducing the upfront costs of transitioning to a profession for which an occupational license is required, opening the door to new opportunities for our Alaska veterans.

By allowing the waiving of these initial fees and red tape, we can reduce this undue economic hardship for the individuals and families for whom employment is most critical, but who in many cases are least able to afford the expenses associated with gaining that employment.