



Senator Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

Senate District A

Senate Bill 12 Sponsor Statement

"Relating to temporary courtesy licenses for certain nonresident professionals; and relating to the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development"

In 2011, House Bill 28 was passed into law to provide expedited temporary courtesy licenses to eligible individuals transferred to Alaska with their active duty service member spouse, so they can practice their trade without experiencing extensive wait times for licensure approval while they complete state requirements. For a military spouse, expedited temporary courtesy licenses are the fastest method of obtaining licensure so they can get to work quickly after relocating to Alaska.

Many states have passed similar legislation into law. However, states such as Washington and Connecticut also included a reporting mechanism so the Legislature and Joint Armed Services Committee equivalent in that state could track the executive branch's progress of implementation. HB 28 did not include a reporting requirement when it was passed.

Senate Bill 12 would require the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to prepare an annual report of courtesy licenses issued the previous fiscal year. This simple reporting mechanism will help facilitate communication between occupational boards, the state agency, the U.S. Department of Defense who assists in relocating service members and families, as well as Alaska legislators with service members in their districts. The bill will also aid in making occupational board staff and legislators more aware of what opportunities are available for helping military spouses enter the Alaska the workforce.

Other states have implemented a similar expedited licensing program to allow military spouses to transfer their professional credentials quickly and contribute to the local economies. While Alaska's program is a model for other states, its implementation has stalled with few eligible professionals taking advantage of the program and spouses reporting delays despite the program being in effect for eight years. Senate Bill 12 would help identify inefficiencies in the program before they cause delays in productivity and ensure the program is working as intended.

Introduced in 2018 as House Bill 262, the bill passed the House unanimously and gained bipartisan support in the Senate before it failed to reach the floor for a vote. The concept of this bill is listed as a priority for the U.S. Department of Defense by the state liaison serving Alaska.

The passage of SB 12 would improve communication between state and federal government agencies and active duty families. By improving efficiency and awareness about what opportunities are available, the bill will help welcome military families to Alaska. I respectfully urge your support of SB 12, a corrective bill that will help ease the transition of military families and get more licensed professionals to work in our communities near military installations.

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