

Date: May 13, 2025

Bill number: AK HB 158

Dear Chair Eischeid and all distinguished members of the House Military & Veteran's Affairs:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this bill. My name is Kihwan Bae, Ph.D., and I am a research associate at the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University. This comment is not submitted on behalf of any party or interest group.

My studies examine how occupational licensing barriers across states affect geographic mobility and labor market outcomes. One of the studies show that expedited licensing programs for military spouses with an out-of-state license increase their employment rate and reduce their receipt of unemployment compensation after a relocation across military bases in different states.¹

Currently, military servicemembers and spouses with an out-of-state license can obtain a temporary license in Alaska. With HB 158, they would become eligible for a regular license. The bill would also allow a temporary license for people with an out-of-state license regardless of their military backgrounds. A potential concern on the policy would be an entry of unscrupulous practitioners. However, the bill would only apply to people with an out-of-state license in good standing without disciplinary actions in the past.

There is a concern on part of the bill that could limit its potential. Section 08.01.061. would give a wide discretion to the licensing authority on the issuance or renewal of a temporary license. Section 08.01.063. would exempt occupations under interstate licensure compacts although they are not a substitute for the military family specific license portability program. Additionally, Sections 08.13.175. and 08.98.180. would put workers with a temporary license under the supervision of incumbent practitioners.

Taken together, research suggests that license portability programs are a way to alleviate burdens on military families who sacrificed for the nation and to improve economic efficiency in the labor market with little harm on public health and safety.

Sincerely,



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¹ Bae, Kihwan, License on the Way: The Effects of Expedited Licensure for Migrant Workers (April 21, 2025). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5234000>.