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House Bill 93: Military Spouse Courtesy License

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 93 calls for the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to prepare an annual report to allow the Alaska Legislature to evaluate the progress of a program to make temporary courtesy occupational licenses available to the spouses of active duty service members stationed in Alaska. In 2011, the Alaska Legislature passed House Bill 28 to provide expedited temporary courtesy licenses if a military spouse possesses a license from a previous jurisdiction with similar requirements to the State of Alaska. However, the bill didn't include reporting requirements.

Making temporary courtesy licenses available to the spouses of active duty service members allows them to practice their chosen trade without having to go through the time-consuming process of meeting state licensure requirements before beginning work. Expediting courtesy licenses for military spouses allows them to go to work quickly after relocating to Alaska, while they work to fulfill the state requirements for their license.

The requirement in House Bill 93 for an annual report will allow the Alaska Legislature, the Joint Armed Services Committee, military installations, and local communities to track the progress of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development in making temporary courtesy licenses available to military spouses. HB 93 also calls for the department to produce and distribute informational materials about temporary courtesy licenses to each board authorized to issue such licenses. The intent of this stipulation is to improve the board's knowledge of the licenses, the application process, and the best practices in providing applicant support. Additionally, the bill calls for the department to encourage boards to designate a single employee to serve as the point of contact for public information and inquiries related to temporary courtesy licenses for military spouses.

The annual report called for in HB 93 would also highlight many of the opportunities available to help military spouses enter the workforce in Alaska. To date, a low number of eligible professionals have taken advantage of the temporary courtesy license program in Alaska, and many participants have reported delays. House Bill 93 would help identify inefficiencies in the program.

Legislation similar to House Bill 93 passed the Alaska House of Representatives unanimously in 2018 but was not taken up by the Alaska State Senate.

Making temporary courtesy occupational and other licenses available to military spouses is a priority for the U.S. Department of Defense.

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