

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

February 1, 2018

1:05 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Chris Tuck, Chair  
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Vice Chair  
Representative Justin Parish  
Representative Ivy Spohnholz  
Representative George Rauscher  
Representative Lora Reinbold  
Representative Dan Saddler

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEW: OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING FOR MILITARY EDUCATION~  
TRAINING & SERVICE CREDIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND  
TEMPORARY OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES FOR MILITARY SPOUSES.

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

KENDRA KLOSTER, Staff  
Representative Chris Tuck  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Reviewed past legislative involvement in  
military licensure and spousal licensure during the overview on  
occupational licensing for military education, training &  
service credit for military service members and temporary  
occupational licenses for military spouses.

MARCUS J. BEAUREGARD, Director  
Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO)  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military  
Community and Family Policy

U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)  
Washington, D.C.

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

MARA JENNINGS  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses, she shared her experience transitioning from military to civilian work.

LISA LUTZ, President  
Solutions for Information Design, LLC (SOLID)  
Burke, Virginia

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

VERDIE BOWEN, Director  
Veterans Affairs  
Office of Veteran Affairs  
Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

ALLISON BIASTOCK, Executive Director  
Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB)  
Office of the Commissioner  
Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

SAICHI OBA, Associate Vice President  
Student and Enrollment Strategy  
University of Alaska (UA)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

SARA CHAMBERS, Operations Manager  
Juneau Office  
Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing  
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development  
(DCCED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided testimony during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

ABIGAIL ST. CLAIR  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered testimony regarding the joint transcript during the overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CHAIR CHRIS TUCK** called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Saddler, Parish, Spohnholz, and Tuck were present at the call to order. Representatives Reinbold, Rauscher, and LeDoux arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**OVERVIEW: Occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members, and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses**

[Contains brief discussion of HB 165.]

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**CHAIR TUCK** announced that the only order of business would be an overview on occupational licensing for military education, training & service credit for military service members and temporary occupational licenses for military spouses.

CHAIR TUCK said the committee would hear from representatives of the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA), the Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD), the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED), and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

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KENDRA KLOSTER, Staff, Representative Chris Tuck, Alaska State Legislature, reviewed that DoD has worked with legislators over the years to facilitate the creation of policies that help service members and their spouses to work in Alaska. The idea is to ensure that all the training military personnel receives while in service can be applied to an occupational license following service. She said past legislation has ensured that military personnel are able to apply [their military training] to a degree program.

MS. KLOSTER said two bills were passed by the Alaska State Legislature. First was House Bill 28, in 2011, which provided for a military courtesy license - a temporary license for spouses of the armed services. This allows spouses who move to Alaska with an occupational license or certificate from another state to continue practicing with a courtesy license. That procedure was expedited under House Bill 28. She said another bill that was passed in 2013 was for military service and training credit, which allows service members leaving service to apply their training to an occupational license. She indicated that boards were asked to adopt regulations to facilitate this. She said another section of the bill passed in 2013 directed the university to adopt a policy for "a procedure to accept academic credit for a degree or technical program for those individuals in the armed forces, with all their military education, training, and service."

MS. KLOSTER stated that this is a nationwide effort. She credited Representatives Saddler and Tuck, as well as a number of Senators, for their work on this issue. She shared that it has been a great honor to have worked with DoD and DMVA. She mentioned the names of upcoming speakers.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD expressed appreciation for the historic perspective given by Ms. Kloster and for the support being given this issue.

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MARCUS BEAUREGARD, Director, Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), stated that the DSLO worked from 2011 to 2016 to obtain readily available endorsements for military spouses to be able to transfer their temporary licensing in order for them to immediately get to work while taking care of state requirements. He said some states began providing expedited applications, which is something the DSLO asked other states to do. He said Alaska's House Bill 28 was primarily associated with temporary licensure and expedited application processes. Legislation was enacted in 46 states, with 2 states already having acceptable practices.

MR. BEAUREGARD said the DSLO asked the University of Minnesota to report on how boards in states were doing, in terms of implementing legislation. The report was made in November 2017 and showed an overview by state. He noted that in the committee packet members could find the ["Military Spouse Licensure Portability Examination State Report"] pertaining to Alaska. The University of Minnesota study found that about half of the states had implemented their requirements, and the DSLO contacted states to ensure they followed through with those requirements. He said the report for Alaska shows a mixed review. He offered his understanding that there is legislation being proposed that would require boards to provide feedback to the legislature on how things are operating.

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MR. BEAUREGARD said that in many states, boards evaluate equivalency of occupational licenses from other states by looking at transcripts, course descriptions, previous licenses, professional experience, and practicum hours, which is not much different from the steps involved in getting a first license. Boards may have the individual retest if the test score is not approved or if the individual took the wrong test. He pointed out that there is not a lot of continuity between states, because each state determines how to evaluate competency. That process is expensive, time-consuming, and anxiety-producing, and the DSLO is working to help each occupation develop an interstate solution by developing occupational interstate compacts, which already exist for nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and

doctors. Interstate compacts are made by building consensus on standards for competency and interstate movement of licenses. He said nurses and physical therapists are allowed to hold a license in one state and have the privilege to practice in other states that are members of the compact, without having to get a new license. He said that would be the gold standard for military spouses and the DSLO's goal for military spouses.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if the military has been "improving their out-processing" regarding resumes.

MR. BEAUREGARD said he does not know, but deferred to Lisa Lutz, whom he said is working to bring together the military and the boards.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER remarked that interstate compacts are "almost a prelude to national licensing." He noted that the professions Mr. Beauregard listed have clear national standards, and he asked if interstate compacts would work for "less rigorous occupational licensees," such as massage therapists and hairdressers.

MR. BEAUREGARD answered yes, "from the standpoint that they are interested and excited to do so." He named the following who have expressed interest: the head of the Association of State Boards for Cosmetology, massage therapists, speech pathologists and audiologists, and the mental health counseling community. He indicated that those looking to create interstate compacts are "looking to have the department also participate to create special provisions within the interstate compacts specifically for military spouses." He related that physical therapists are part of an interstate compact in great part because the head of their federation of state boards is a military spouse. He added, "And so, we're just piggybacking on her good work."

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER talked about a military spouse who was a highly qualified, board certified behavioral analyst, who could not work in Alaska. He said he appreciates the efforts of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs to reduce those barriers.

MR. BEAUREGARD opined that a primary benefit of an interstate compact is its impact on all individuals in the profession.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked if legislation is required or if boards can take care of the issue on their own.

MR. BEAUREGARD answered that boards define compacts, and compacts, as entities, must be legislated into law. In response to a follow-up question, he confirmed that there are no compacts pending the approval of the Alaska State Legislature. He brought up the topic of telemedicine and surmised that could be an important issue for Alaska. He explained that means that when a military family with an established relationship with a therapist in the state of Washington moves to Alaska, the family is allowed to maintain that relationship with the therapist while in Alaska.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD shared that being an expat living with a military husband overseas "wreaks havoc on a spouse's career." She said it was a huge adjustment for her coming back to the U.S., and she had little to no support. She expressed support for [interstate compacts]. She asked if all state compacts align with the U.S. Constitution. She predicted a health care shortage crisis in the near future in Alaska, and she said there is a golden opportunity [to facilitate] military spouses.

MR. BEAUREGARD affirmed that the state compacts align with the Constitution. He noted that most of the compacts include telemedicine, which is another benefit in states with remote populations. He said while at a conference of psychologists, he heard an insurance specialist tell the attendees that if they tried to practice telemedicine without a compact agreement, "their malpractice insurance goes out the window."

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ asked Mr. Beauregard to clarify whether compacts for nurses, physician assistants (PAs), physical therapists, psychologists, and doctors are covered under current compacts, because she said that information is not included in the aforementioned report.

MR. BEAUREGARD said the compacts have been developed and "accepted by their community," and they are in the process of getting approved through legislation. In response to follow-up questions, he confirmed that the Alaska State Legislature could adopt existing compacts, with the support of the various

licensing boards in the state. He said, "You look at our list, and we don't have, perhaps, the most prominent occupations that we looked at. We looked at the ones that did not have an occupational licensure compact pending. Or, in the case of teachers, we didn't do anything to really impact teachers as we went through our process, and so, we didn't include them in terms of the study."

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ asked if there had been any specific outreach to boards regarding interstate compacts.

MR. BEAUREGARD offered his understanding that there has been. He said the representatives from the national associations are generally the people who assist legislatures to approve compacts, and the first step in doing so is to get the various boards in the state to support the idea.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER offered his understanding that the State of Alaska is party to about three dozen interstate compacts. He posited that states must be careful when entering compacts and should have the support of the boards, because in addition to being of benefit to "the more mobile and transient," they can result in "a whole bunch of people in one profession migrating to our state or other states that might threaten the ability of the current residents to practice their profession." He commented that competition can be a double-edged sword.

MR. BEAUREGARD imparted that some interesting litigation took place in North Carolina holding boards accountable for a trade restriction. The board sided with the plaintiff.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ said she thinks there is some merit to the concern that an interstate compact could trump "a local state's board's desire to have a very high level, for example, of training." For example, in Alaska, nurse practitioners have gone from earning a master's degree to a doctorate. She noted that Alaska has a shortage of physical therapists, nurses, and doctors; therefore, she said she is not concerned about competition in those areas, while she is concerned about Alaska having high standards for care. She said she does not want to see the lowest denominator become the standard across the nation "just because we want to try to support military families." She

said she does not presume that is the case, but cautioned that is a factor that the state should consider.

MR. BEAUREGARD concurred that that is an important topic for conversation. He said he is watching it unfold for the speech pathologists and audiologists as they work through their compact. He said he had asked that group to show him their requirements, and when he saw them on a matrix, he noticed that there are few outliers. He said he was impressed that in coming up with a compact this group was questioning the benefit of minimum requirements in each state, and he said he does not think the lowest denominator would be the outcome, but rather "what makes sense for them as a community to provide that level of desired competency that they can trust."

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked, "Do you join the compact and then try to figure out what the requirements are going to be, or do you see what the requirements are going to be and then join the compact?"

MR. BEAUREGARD answered that is definitely the latter: [most] boards develop the requirements [of the compact], and then it is incumbent upon the states to decide if they are going to join the compact. To a follow-up question, he said one option when a state does not agree with the compact is not to join it.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if there were any other "initiatives coming down the pike" that may benefit Alaska's military members or spouses.

MR. BEAUREGARD said one compact coming in 2019 would allow military families to preregister their children in a school district before they move there. He said this is a win-win for both the school district and the family, because it gives the family some reassurance that the school district knows it is coming, and it gives the school the ability to assess the numbers it will have in the coming school year.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER suggested that might be added to the interstate compact on military children's education.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked why early registration to schools would not be offered to anyone moving up from another state, not just those in the military.

MARCUS BEAUREGARD responded that that may be a good idea to include everyone; however, the DSLO addresses only military families.

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MARA JENNINGS shared that she is a U.S. Navy veteran and hospital corpsman, who experienced a failed process of transitioning from military to civilian work. She acknowledged that her experience may not be relevant currently, because she got out of service in 2006, and there may have been changes of which she is unaware.

MS. JENNINGS described that when she exited the military, 49 states recognized her training as sufficient to be able to challenge the licensed practical nurse (LPN) exam in order get a license; however, Alaska was not one of those states. She said she sought help from the Office of the Governor and the appropriate board, as well as various representatives in the legislature, but could not get the rule changed. She was told she could challenge the medical assistant position, which is below that of a hospital corpsman. She did so, but was asked for a signature from her instructor from corps school, but he had been deployed from Afghanistan. She sent the form to Afghanistan, but it was returned as undeliverable. She said she had paid a \$500 fee to apply; however, the application "timed out" because she was not able to get the signature. She said after that she "walked away." She stated that as a result, the state of Alaska is missing a skilled, medical professional, although she does volunteer as an EMT II at Capital City Fire & Rescue.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Ms. Jennings to what degree the applicability to civilian qualifications were considered when she went through corpsman school.

MS. JENNINGS answered that it is an accelerated learning program, twelve weeks in length, in which she was taught field medicine and basic hospital care. The training goes beyond that of a medical assistant and EMT and teaches the care of patients. In response to a follow-up request for clarification, she said

she was told to which states her training would transfer. She said, "When I looked at the current requirements for an LPN, I could check all the boxes easily, but ... the board didn't recognize that I could check all the boxes." She explained that the training was complete, but the board [in Alaska] was not willing to recognize the training.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked Ms. Jennings to speak more about her length of service as a hospital corpsman.

MS. JENNINGS related that although she was field hospital certified and second alternate to go to Iraq, she was not called to go; therefore, she worked strictly in a hospital setting for just over five years in labor and delivery, dermatology, pediatrics, and family medicine. She said she was capable of performing procedures that nurses cannot perform in the civilian world and gained many other skills that were transferable. In response to Representative Parish, she spoke about medical boards and her experience with child birth.

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MR. BEAUREGARD, at the request of Chair Tuck, informed the committee that the next person to speak, Ms. Lutz, has been an advisor to his office and a primary contractor for "the office of primary record for credentialing," within DoD. He said her work has been instrumental in "bridging the distance between understanding the requirements" so that "a servicemember transitioning out of the military has a better opportunity of gaining a license."

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LISA LUTZ, President, Solutions for Information Design, LLC (SOLID), highlighted the work of her company. She said most relevant to the overview today is the work that SOLID does in translating military training and experience to civilian jobs and credentials. She said SOLID has done work in this area for a variety of federal agencies, including DoD, each of the military services, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. She said for the military services, SOLID supports the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Marine Corps for credentialing opportunities online, called "COOL" programs. These are programs that map military occupations to civilian credentials and identify resources to

help service members obtain those credentials. Ms. Lutz said SOLID has worked extensively on initiatives intended to facilitate academic credit and state licensure of military service members and veterans. She said this includes the National Governors' Association, the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit, and a pilot project with the State of Indiana to test state and military participation in a nationwide initiative called the "Credential Engine." Ms. Lutz clarified that she is not speaking on behalf of any of the organizations with which SOLID works.

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MS. LUTZ directed attention to a handout in the committee packet entitled "Best Practices for Facilitating Service Member and Veteran Credentialing." She said the document focuses on steps that national certification agencies and state licensing bodies can take to help service members get maximum credit for their extensive military training and experience. She said the extent to which training aligns to civilian credential requirement varies by occupational area. In some instances there is complete alignment, such as in healthcare and information technology. More often there is only partial alignment, and this is because the military trains to a mission. Important is that the service member gets credit for his/her equivalent training and experience, and there are a variety of ways for academic institutions and state institutions to make sure that happens.

MS. LUTZ highlighted how academic institutions and state agencies can maximize the credit that they give military training and experience by accepting third-party reviews of military and experience in order to assess its equivalency. She stated, "There are a number of different organizations with significant subject matter expertise that have gone to extensive lengths to evaluate military training and determine the extent to which it equates to credentials, including licenses and degrees. For example, the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard all contract with the American Council on Education to evaluate military training and experience and recommend college credits." She said the staff of the American Council of Education (ACE), along with members of academia, perform vigorous reviews to make credit recommendations, and the results are published online in ACE's military guide, which can be used to assess the amount of credit that might be awarded.

MS. LUTZ advised that another third-party review, of which states can take advantage, is done by academic program accreditors. She said some people do not realize that military training programs, particularly in the healthcare arena, have been accredited by nationally recognized program accreditors - the same accreditors that review programs offered by colleges and universities. For example the Navy surgical technologists, cardiovascular technologists, and cytotechnologists programs have all been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Professionals. She said if a state licensing agency recognizes the third-party program accreditation, it will not have to undertake its own reviews of military training to assess equivalency.

MS. LUTZ related that another type of third-party review of military training has been done by national consortia of state licensing agencies. For example, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing has reviewed military training against national standards for practical nurses and has provided an assessment of how the two align. The National Association of State Emergency Medical Service Officers has reviewed military medic training for alignment with EMS credentials. She said these assessments are being used by many state licensing agencies and academic institutions nationwide.

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MS. LUTZ said the second best practice that could be emulated in Alaska is the use of available service documentation to assess individual service member's and veteran's unique qualifications. To [Representative Saddler's previous mention of a resume], she said she is not aware of any current efforts to develop a service member resume; however, each of the military services offer formal documentation of military service members' training and experience, which can be used by state licensing agencies and academic institutions much like an academic transcript is used. Ms. Lutz informed that the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard all have training documented in a "joint services transcript," which includes the college credit recommendations made by the American Council on Education. For those in the Air Force, she said, the regionally accredited Community College of the Air Force offers its own transcript for awarded credit.

MS. LUTZ highlighted a third best practice, which is the development and/or recognition of bridge training programs for military trained applicants. She said, "In situations where military training provides partial credit toward licensing or

degree requirements, credential agencies and academic institutions should recognize this and not require service members or veterans to receive the entire training that they have received. Rather, they should provide credit for the military training and either create bridge programs targeted ... just to the training gap or recognize bridge programs created by others." She said there are a number of institutions nationwide that have gone to considerable effort to develop bridge programs in the military.

MS. LUTZ noted that the aforementioned Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit is a consortium of approximately 12 Midwestern states, many of which have developed model bridge programs that she said could serve as examples for academic institutions in Alaska.

MS. LUTZ brought attention to another best practice, which she said entails state participation in Credential Engine, which is a non-profit organization created to increase transparency about the wide variety of credentials offered throughout the U.S. She said this includes licenses, certifications, degrees, certificate programs, and badges. She said the organization was formed based on guidance from advisory groups made up of a variety of stakeholders, including industry and academia, and it has been funded by grants from organizations, including the Lumina Foundation, J.P. Morgan Chase, and Microsoft. Ms. Lutz related that a key component of Credential Engine's work is the creation of a national credential registry, in which credential agencies can enter their information "to shed light on the scope of the credentials and the competency that they measure." She said the military has participated in Credential Engine as both the consumer and provider of information. She stated, "This can serve as a critical means of linking military and civilian credentials." She concluded by suggesting that Alaska might consider participating in the initiative by entering its credentials into the registry and "demonstrate, to the extent appropriate," how it recognizes military training and experience.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Ms. Lutz which of the strategies might be more successful for Alaska.

MS. LUTZ answered that she thinks it will take more than one, which is why she highlighted four out of the twenty or so that are listed in the handout. She cited complexities of the

credentialing system and military occupational classification and training as reasons for a multi-faceted approach. She recommended that the licensing and academic entities assess the options, first choose the best practice with "low-hanging fruit," and subsequently choose other best practice options.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER, regarding bridge training, mentioned a bill he had sponsored to relieve certain vehicles from having to undergo the motor vehicle road test. He said much of the military equipment uses automatic transmission, while "over-the-road" tractors and trailers use manual transmission, which could be an opportunity for bridge training. He asked which military skill set would be the most challenging to translate into occupational licensing.

MS. LUTZ answered that most challenging are those jobs that are the most military-centric, for example, the combat arms, the field artillery, the infantry. They are the most difficult to transfer, because they do not have a civilian equivalent. She said there have been a number of initiatives underway to consider the underlying skill sets that service members in those occupations obtain and help connect them with civilian occupations. In response to a follow-up question, she commended Alaska for the steps it has already taken, as previously outlined by Ms. Kloster, and she said she thinks there are many ways to build on those steps. She acknowledged Mr. Beauregard had said many states are making efforts to recognize substantially equivalent military training and experience. She said, "Some states have asked for ... the military training materials and programs of instruction, but from what we've observed, that is not a sustainable approach. It works to some degree, but most states' academic institutions and state licensing agencies don't have the resources to continually review and assess those - and they change quite frequently - so, that's when I go back to ... the recommendation to rely on the third-party assessments that have already been done."

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VERDIE BOWEN, Director, Veterans Affairs, Office of Veteran Affairs, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA), stated that he finds it interesting that when an individual is on active duty, he/she can go from installation to installation and his/her skillsets are documented; however, when that person transfers to the civilian side, that same documentation is not

permissible as the basis of training. He mentioned [Ms. Jennings'] predicament of having to attempt to obtain a signature from the trainer in Afghanistan. He said, "We don't force doctors or nurses that transfer from one state to another to go to their original training instructor to sign a document to accept their training; I think that that's ... really sort of reaching it." He said he thinks that a doctor with a certificate received while in the military has "a transferable skill that translates easily to the civilian world in most cases." He surmised that someone who loads armament onto military aircraft may have difficulty [transferring that skillset to obtain a job] with Alaska Airlines; however, he said he believes that person has basic skill sets that are transferrable. Regarding the joint services transcripts mentioned by [Ms. Lutz], he said, "We see those transcripts come in, and a lot of times those are not readily looked at and provided 100 percent of their skill sets that they've already attained." He emphasized that the standard in military schools is high and failure is even higher; the onus is on the military service person to train hard and be ready for a mission. For each skill set, the military has worked hard with other organizations. He said when he ran a subsidiary for a corporation, he used O\*NET OnLine, which is an online converter for skill sets. He said each service branch has the same kind of software application that transfers military skillsets to the civilian market "one-for-one."

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MR. BOWEN said he thinks the issue is that "we have passed some solid legislation for our boards to review" but the boards will have to spend more time working on each military skill set. He said someone going from an LPN to EMT III is not much of a change in skillset - "it could have been worse." He said he has seen people go from being thoroughly trained in an area to having "to start all over again." He added, "I think that that's what we're trying to prevent here."

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Mr. Bowen what would be "the easiest way to do the most good" for military spouses in Alaska.

MR. BOWEN answered that boards need to review the training that each one of the skill sets brings. He offered an example.

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CHAIR TUCK said there is a "helmets to hardhats" program, which facilitates those leaving the military to get into apprenticeship programs. He said it is difficult to tell from looking at a "DD Form 214" whether all the hours put in by a military person are in a trade; some of those hours may have been spent marching or doing drills, for example. He expressed hope that with compacts, those military personnel could skip the apprenticeship program and go directly into full licensure as, for example, electricians.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked what, if any, support is needed from the legislature to "help solve the licensure problem for medical professionals."

MR. BOWEN stated each board has the ability to review "education pieces." He explained that a military member's specialized training record is not reflected in his/her condition of service - the DD Form 214 - but is reflected in another document.

2:18:04 PM

ALLISON BIASTOCK, Executive Director, Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), Office of the Commissioner, Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD), stated that AWIB is a governor-appointed board whose membership represents business, industry, education, organized labor, state government, and - following passage of House Bill 46 in 2015 - a seat held by a veteran. She said the board has a policy oversight role for job and vocational education programs and provides recommendations to the state to further train and prepare Alaskans for the workforce.

MS. BIASTOCK continued as follows:

House Bill 84 directed the Alaska Workforce Investment Board to implement a statewide policy under the Technical and Vocation Education Program, or (TVEP), to ensure that TVEP fund recipients had a policy in place to accept credit or instructional hours from program participants that provided satisfactory evidence of completion of military training and education.

MS. BIASTOCK said TVEP was established by the legislature in 2000 for the purpose of enhancing the quality and accessibility of job training across the state and aligning training with regional workforce demands. She said TVEP funds are distributed to technical and vocational education entities across the state, as designated by the legislature in statute. She stated that to comply with the provisions of House Bill 84, AWIB developed and adopted Policy [100-2014], and a copy of the policy has been provided to committee members. She said the policy requires TVEP fund recipients "to have a policy and procedure in place to accept and transcribe credit hours for the degree or training program for any applicant who can provide satisfactory evidence of the successful completion of relevant military education, training, or service as a member of the armed forces, the United States Reserve, the National Guard of any state, the military reserve of any state, or the militia of any state." She imparted that the policy references the American Council on Education (ACE); ACE's military evaluation programs are used by a majority of U.S. colleges, universities, and vocational institutions.

MS. BIASTOCK stated that AWIB policy requires TVEP recipients to have a policy for military personnel and veterans to apply or petition for credit at a level that is consistent with ACE guidelines. She noted that the policy was updated in 2016; language regarding eligibility was revised to ensure that all currently serving members of the military and honorably discharged veterans are eligible to receive military credit under the policy. She said the Division of Employment and Training Services, within DLWD, administers TVEP funds to recipients named in statute. She noted that the department has administered funds to all but three TVEP recipients. She said Galena Interior Learning Academy is a secondary program funded through the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) and the University of Alaska, and Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) gets its funding directly. She stated that TVEP recipients are asked if they have a policy in place that complies with AWIB Policy 100-2014, and all the institutions for which the department administers funds do have that policy in place.

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SAICHI OBA, Associate Vice President, Student and Enrollment Strategy, University of Alaska (UA), stated that UA is aware of and is able to meet its responsibility relating to House Bill 84. He said UA follows national standards "articulated in the

joint statement on the transfer and awarding of credits developed by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers." Further, he said UA follows the military guide provided by the American Council on Education, which he said is one of the best practices mentioned previously by Ms. Lutz. Mr. Oba said UA also complies with the Council on Higher Education Accreditation Standards for accepting military credit.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Mr. Oba what percent of students at the UA campuses are veterans, active duty, or guard reserve.

MR. OBA replied that he did not have that data with him but could find out and provide an answer later.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Ms. Biastock what the value is of having a veteran sit on AWIB.

MS. BIASTOCK answered that a veteran can bring the perspective of someone who has undergone the transition from active duty to civilian employment.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if there is any quantitative proof of that.

MS. BIASTOCK responded that veterans are a priority group under some of the programs administered under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. She said there is an annual job fair for veterans; the most recent one held in Anchorage featured 121 vendors and drew 740 job seekers.

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SARA CHAMBERS, Operations Manager, Juneau Office, Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), imparted that she oversees 43 of Alaska's licensing programs, 21 of which have boards. She noted that Deputy Commissioner Fred Parady and Assistant Attorney General Robert Auth were available for questions. She said the division is dedicated to recognizing the needs expressed previously by other testifiers today. She said she would cover a handout provided to the

committee and speak to some of the challenges of the boards and division.

MS. CHAMBERS directed attention to the handout entitled "How Alaska is Meeting the Department of Defense's Three Best Practice Guidelines for Military Spouse Licensure." She said Alaska is meeting all three of the best practices. She said the first is licensure by endorsement or credentials, which lets a military spouse be eligible for licensure by endorsement if he/she currently possesses a license from a previous jurisdiction with requirements similar to the board's requirements in the current jurisdiction. Ms. Chambers said, "Almost all of our licensing programs do this and have done it for years prior to any military licensing laws." She paraphrased the information following "Alaska's Action," on the first page of the handout, which read as follows [original punctuation provided, with some formatting changes]:

Except as noted below, all 100+ licenses issued by this division offer a version of licensure by endorsement, credentials, or reciprocity. These terms all recognize the existing licensure of an individual in another jurisdiction in lieu of requiring a national examination to complete licensure. They are each slightly different and include minimal requirements for receiving an Alaska license, including:

- verification of substantially similar or equal requirements in the other jurisdiction
- successful passage of any statutorily-required Alaska-specific exam requirements or criminal history background check
- completion of an application for licensure
- proof of bonding if required, and
- payment of fees

MS. CHAMBERS said all, except a handful, of the division's programs offer this best practice. Some do not need it, because the licensure requirements are not very rigorous, and some "are determined to require Alaska-specific knowledge." One example she gave was for marine pilots. She stated, "You want the guy or gal driving the cruise ship through Wrangell Narrows to have done it before."

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MS. CHAMBERS said the second best practice is temporary licensure. She said legislation was adopted in 2011 and 2013, for spouses and members of the military to qualify for additional temporary licensure consideration in addition to temporary licenses that may already exist. She said the division has been "doing this faithfully" since the legislation was adopted and believes it is a great service.

MS. CHAMBERS said the third best practice is expediting applications, which prioritizes applications from military spouses. She said this benefit is given in consideration of the tight turnaround time that results when military spouses move from one location to another. She informed the committee that the military licensure online links to every page on the division's web site. She said there are specialized forms that help staff readily identify military spouses and personnel.

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MS. CHAMBERS posed the question: Is there a problem in Alaska? She said she thinks that is a question that the legislature is considering and one of the questions that agencies need to address together. She reported that within the division's 43 licensing programs, fewer than 70 of its 13,396 new licensee applications in 2017 were related to the military. She emphasized that that is a small percentage.

MS. CHAMBERS directed attention to the bottom of page 2 of the handout, which shows "2017 Professional Licensing of Military Applicants By the Numbers." She said there were no programs that reported a preponderance of these applications. Professional counseling had the most, with approximately 10 applications. Every other category, including massage therapy, pharmacy, psychology, social work, and barbers and hairdressers, had five or less applications.

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MS. CHAMBERS addressed "Challenges Facing Military Licensure in Alaska," as shown on the third and final page of the handout. She talked about there being a lack of a military "crosswalk." She said she personally met with boards, "educated them on the need," and showed them strategies that could be used to adopt regulations. At that time, the boards told her that this task requires tools from DoD and some level of expertise in reading the documents. She acknowledged that when looking at her husband's DD Form 214, it was not apparent all the course work

that he took. She said new tools have been developed since then, but there is no way to prepare for every possible outcome through regulation. Ms. Chambers continued:

So, what our boards did - and I think wisely, given our need to conserve resources and use their time and resources wisely - is to adopt a "take this on a case-by-case basis," which is much more easily handled through the tools that were mentioned, the COOL resource, the Credential Engine resource. When you have an actual application in front of you, then those ... resources make sense.

MS. CHAMBERS said today she refreshed her memory on how the ACE resource works, and it cannot be used without a specific application, "because it requires that level of information to perform the translation, as it were." She said she thinks "the boards, at that point, are treating this seriously and wisely." She said several boards have adopted regulations in response to applicants, having gained increased knowledge through the process of "going through a particular military spouse application." She said she thinks that after the legislation of 2014, [the boards and the division] realized that a "to-do" list was not possible, given the available resources.

MS. CHAMBERS said the other challenge is the emergence of the licensure compacts. Various boards, most particularly the Board of Nursing and the Medical Board, are considering compacts and analyzing how they make sense for the state, the costs associated, and whether they want to participate in them. She observed not every state is entering compacts, so the boards are doing their due diligence to learn more about them. She said compacts are growing; as of last year, those in charge of the medical licensure compact were not able to inform [Alaska's Medical Board] how much it would cost to participate.

MS. CHAMBERS said the division has heard "through the rumor mill" that there might be an effort "to grant military spouses a separate pathway to licensure - one-for-one reciprocity." She specified that "endorsement credential" and "reciprocity" are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are not interchangeable processes. She stated concern that if a completely separate standard for military spouses was to be created, it might violate equal protection rights for other Alaskans. She said that is the issue to which the assistant attorney general is available to speak. She stated that from the perspective of the division, based on information provided by the public and

stakeholders, there does not seem to be a crisis; however, the division wants to be prepared to serve the additional military moving to Alaska.

MS. CHAMBERS expressed regret that Ms. Jennings had to leave previously. She stated that Ms. Jennings' experience of 12 years ago is "not relevant to today." She explained, "We would never ask someone to send a form to Afghanistan to ... get a signature." She said she wants to reassure the committee that "those types of experiences paint a great picture that are a cautionary tale for us." She mentioned that in terms of the national conversation, in which the division is engaged, there may be information provided that will require more due diligence. She said the aforementioned University of Minnesota study was "quite factually incorrect about Alaska." She said she became aware of the study last week and plans to contact the lead researcher to see if corrections can be made.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH said he is glad to hear Ms. Chamber's remarks concerning Ms. Jennings' issue. He asked Ms. Chambers to describe the new methodology that would prevent the same thing from happening to other people leaving service and how the division came about it.

MS. CHAMBERS explained that the division's boards are taking the documentation provided by the service member and "running it through the paces," such as the COOL Engine and the ACE resource, to make certain the review is being given due diligence. She emphasized that it is important that the boards have information that they understand, and she surmised that since 2006 there are additional joint service transcripts available "to help demystify military terminology for nurses that may be sitting on a board." The last application to the Board of Nursing was two years ago, and she said the board and division staff "bent over backwards to get that information." She added, "But if we aren't provided an explanation of what the training is, they don't have anything to review."

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH said he knows that ACE credits are excellent for what they cover, but he also knows that boarding officers go through the federal law enforcement academy yet that is not reflected in the ACE credits. He asked if any efforts are underway to ameliorate that. He asked, "In the case that

something doesn't fit into one of the boxes, if one of the engines can't account for it, how much effort is being made to ... approximate in the absence of a formal tool?"

MS. CHAMBERS answered by emphasizing the importance of giving boards a clear path to tracking down pertinent information. She said the last time DoD has worked with the division was in 2014, and if there are new resources, the division would like to work with DoD and review the resources. That said, she reiterated that the applicants are "few and far between"; therefore, it is difficult to say that the division has developed an approach. In response to a follow-up question as to whether more service members may wish to submit applications, she said she thinks it is incumbent upon those responsible for helping military service members in re-entering [civilian life] to give those members the appropriate tools to do so. Further, she said it is important for the division, DoD, and DMVA to work together to ensure they are all aware of each other's resources. She stated, "We can't expect laypeople to know what every division in the State of Alaska does and where to go, and so we work to point each other to each other ... when that comes up, but we can improve in that area."

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked whether military veterans and military spouses are afforded a similar degree of support, in terms of temporary provisional licensing and expedited applications.

MS. CHAMBERS answered yes.

[2:48:15 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK, in response to Ms. Chambers having said the division has not been in contact with DoD since 2014, encouraged her to keep in contact with DoD, because there are personnel changes that occur. He then drew attention to the aforementioned report from the University of Minnesota, and said there is a mistake in the first paragraph, which he said should read "360 days," not "180 days." [The sentence in which this occurs read as follows]:

Passed in 2011, House Bill 28 states that boards may issue military spouses temporary licenses that are valid for 180 days and the temporary licenses may be extended for one additional 180-day period.

CHAIR TUCK asked Ms. Chambers to point out any other places in the document that need to be amended.

MS. CHAMBERS replied that she plans to write a report in communication with the university. She pointed to a box in the top-right of the first page, and she said licensure by endorsement is available through almost all of the division's programs; therefore, she said that category should be checked but is not. She then drew attention to the bullet points under "General Findings" and said all but the first one is incorrect - that is four out of five incorrect. On the second page, she indicated the corrections should reflect that licensure by endorsement is offered for the Dental Hygiene Board and Real Estate Commission, and the Occupational Therapy Board offers the same temporary licensure opportunities "as any other military spouse applicant." She said there are contradictions between the general findings and board-specific findings. She said she does not mean to be overly critical but stressed it is important for the committee to be aware that the University of Minnesota does not realize that the division works as an umbrella agency; therefore, the resources are not offered "board-by-board" but are offered "to all 43 of our programs."

CHAIR TUCK requested a copy of Ms. Chambers' corrections.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH noted that he is sponsoring HB 165, which pertains to positions without licensure requirement, particularly in state service. He said it has been the experience of some that they have not been given the ability to recognize relevant military experience in order to apply it to civilian job requirements. He asked Ms. Chambers if she has observed such cases.

MS. CHAMBERS said she is not familiar with HB 165 but would read it and get back to Representative Parish with a response.

[2:52:45 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK suggested that the definition of "endorsement" may be different depending on who is asked, and he asked Ms. Chambers for [the state's] definition.

MS. CHAMBERS directed attention to the first page of the aforementioned handout that addresses three best practices, and she said the first paragraph to the right of "Licensure by

Endorsement or Credentials" is DoD's definition of licensure by endorsement, and it is also the definition used by the division. It read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Licensure by endorsement refers to occupational boards not requiring an examination for military spouses to transfer their licenses. Spouses are eligible for licensure by endorsement if they currently possess a license from a previous jurisdiction with similar requirements as the board's requirements in the current jurisdiction.

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ABIGAIL ST. CLAIR stated that although she was a staff member for Representative Rauscher, she was testifying on behalf of herself as a military veteran. She stated that in the U.S. Army, she was a preventive medicine specialist, which was a fancy term for a public health expert, and her job included entomology, epidemiology, industrial hygiene, and environmental health. The ACE program was able to convert much of that knowledge, skill, and training into the joint transcript. She stated, "On the enlisted side of the house, it is stressed that you improve on your civilian education, and so by using this transcript, we encourage the military members to ... take ... their training from early on in their career and continue to update it throughout their career. And it's not just their initial training for their [military occupational specialty] (MOS)." Ms. St. Clair listed some of the additional training she received and positions she held while in the Army, and she said that additional training and certification, while not always reflected in a DD Form 214, is reflected in the transcript. She estimated that at least 75 percent of veterans have an "I love me book," which she explained is where all certifications are consolidated. She said, "You can take that to ... any branch education program, and they'll verify and accept those certifications to be added to your transcript." She emphasized that [the joint transcript] works well, especially for those who plan on "continuing on the civilian sector what they did in the military." Ms. St. Clair said she was fortunate to have finished her bachelor's in science and master's in public health while still in service, but if she hadn't, the joint transcript would have helped in her transition as a veteran.

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MS. ST. CLAIR, in response to a question from Representative Parish, said she currently has no recommendations for the committee but would bring them forward at a later time if an idea comes to her.

CHAIR TUCK expressed his appreciation to the invited testifiers.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.