

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

April 2, 2019

1:01 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Chair  
Representative Chris Tuck, Vice Chair  
Representative Chuck Kopp  
Representative Geran Tarr  
Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Sharon Jackson  
Representative George Rauscher

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 93

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

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 93

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TUCK

03/13/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/13/19	(H)	MLV, L&C
04/02/19	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SARA CHAMBERS, Director  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Honoring Service by Delivering Service," dated April 2019, and answered questions.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Defense-State Liaison Office," and answered questions.

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 93.

SARA CHAMBERS, Director  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing on HB 93.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 93.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CHAIR GABRIELLE LEDOUX** called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Representatives Thompson, Jackson, Tuck, and LeDoux were present at the call to order. Representatives Kopp, Rauscher, and Tarr arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

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CHAIR LEDOUX announced that the first order of business would be a presentation by the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development.

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SARA CHAMBERS, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Honoring Service by Delivering Service." Ms. Chambers informed the committee that the division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing (the division) revamped their mission statement to read, "inspiring public confidence through balanced regulation of competent professional and business services." She stated that in addition to professional licensing, which is the division's focus, they also perform the state's business licensing functions and corporate registrations. She added that they have a team of enforcement for business licensing, nicotine endorsements on business licenses, and all professional licensing statutes and regulations (slides 2 and 3). Regarding professional licensing, there are 43 different programs within the division; twenty-two of the programs are regulated by the division without a board and twenty-one are professions regulated by boards or commissions (slides 4 and 5).

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CHAIR LEDOUX asked why some professions are regulated by the division and others are regulated by a board or commission.

MS. CHAMBERS replied that the decision is made when statutes are created through the legislative process. They consider whether a board is necessary to ensure that the governance of the statutes and regulations is adequate, or if the division's administrative staff can handle it.

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MS. CHAMBERS turned attention to the benefits provided for military personnel and spouses. She said that the division currently provides a military licensing-specific web page that

details military licensing benefits. Almost all programs have an option to license by endorsement or credential and temporary professional licensure is also offered for military personnel and spouses. Other benefits for military personnel and spouses include expedited application process for spouses of active-duty military, exemption from professional licensing requirements for military personnel in "combat/danger pay/hazardous duty zones," and review of military experience as equivalent to licensing prerequisite (slides 6 and 7).

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON sought clarification on the expedited application process for spouses of active-duty military. He asked if it's fair if someone who just moved to Alaska can be put in front of longtime Alaska residents who have applied and are about to be licensed.

MS. CHAMBERS said that is what the law requires by statute, noting that that the legislature passed that legislation several years ago. She explained that the rationale was that military families are important to the state and because spouses of military members already have paperwork and restrictions, this was a small gesture that could be made to help them ease through the process.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON, referencing a "legal opinion," expressed concern about creating a separate standard for spouse licensure. He read the following statement

Setting lower standards, education or experience for licensure because they are married to a military service member will probably meet significant opposition from licensing boards. It could deceive the public and may even be found to be in violation of state and Federal legal protection laws.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON added that he is a veteran and a big backer of the military. Nonetheless, he stressed the importance of fairness to all Alaskans.

MS. CHAMBERS reported that she is the author of the document being referred to, which was from legislation that was proposed last year. She offered her understanding that currently, legislation that would set a lower standard for military spouses or military members has not been introduced.

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REPRESENTATIVE KOPP questioned whether universal temporary licensing is something that can be done through a cooperative agreement through other states.

MS. CHAMBERS replied that the division is "moments" away from proposing a bill via the governor that would allow the department the ability to issue temporary licenses to people who hold licenses in other states, which would allow them to meet the state's requirements while continuing to work. She noted that this wouldn't just be for military members or their spouses, it would be for anyone that could demonstrate competency. She further stated that the administration's intention is that universal temporary licensing would be a more streamlined method than compact licensing.

MS. CHAMBERS returned to maximizing use of military benefits. She said that the division is working administratively to overhaul their license applications as well as seeking military and community partners to help inform applicants about processes and timelines (slide 8). She offered advice for military personnel and spouses who are applying for a license. She said do not delay in applying, ask for information, be patient, and include details (slide 9).

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REPRESENTATIVE TARR questioned whether every applicant pays the same amount in licensure fees.

MS. CHAMBERS said the division is continuing to ensure sustainability, adding that there is only one special military reduced fee that was adopted regarding nursing; however, they were informed that the military nurses could not take advantage of special or reduced qualifications so those licenses were not valid.

CHAIR LEDOUX inquired as to the length of time it takes to receive a license. She asked Ms. Chambers to share the normal wait time for several of the licenses they offer.

MS. CHAMBERS explained that many of the licenses that don't require extensive education or documentation can be issued in one week to 10 days, such as barber and hairdresser licenses or construction contractor licenses. She noted that the healthcare licenses cannot be produced quickly unless the applicant submits everything at one time, which is usually the holdup. She pointed out that board approval is another aspect that can delay

the process another two weeks; however, they are working on giving boards electronic ability rather than having to physically meet. She said that the delay is almost always due to applicants waiting on their transcript, hospital verifications, or proof they don't have discipline in another state.

CHAIR LEDOUX asked if other states post disciplinary action for various professional licenses online.

MS. CHAMBERS answered yes and added that many associations for state boards have created databases that make that process a lot easier for licensing boards and applicants. She noted that those streamlining efforts are not always mandatory and if the applicant doesn't choose to participate, the process can take longer.

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CHAIR LEDOUX sought clarification on the applicant's choice to participate. In reference to CourtView or "various disciplinary actions of a board," she mentioned that normally an individual doesn't get to decide whether his or her name is displayed or not.

MS. CHAMBERS acknowledged that. She said there are databases that are available to members of certain professions that are like clearing houses. She explained that if a doctor is credentialed in 100 hospitals, it is important to know if they have been disciplined in any of them. The Federation of State Medical Boards has created a national database so a physician who is getting licensed in various states doesn't have to go through that process every time, which is the type of database they can opt in to. She noted that transmitting discipline is not optional as not every state has discipline online.

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REPRESENTATIVE TUCK addressed the question of fairness regarding veterans having preference over others. He mentioned a piece of legislation that passed last year which allowed a veteran hiring preference for public employment. He said that the U.S. Department of Labor included an exception for states who wanted to adopt that preference for the private sector as well, so that they aren't in violation. Alaska opted in last year. He addressed the Helmets to Hardhats program in the construction industry, which give preference to veterans who are exiting

service and entering construction trades and hasn't been challenged yet. One of the reasons they created the program was for the skills and expertise that military members receive through their basic training, like leadership and promptness, that translate very well into new industries.

**PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

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CHAIR LEDOUX announced that the next order of business would be a presentation by the U.S. Department of Defense.

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TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison, Defense-State Liaison Office, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Defense-State Liaison Office." Ms. Perreault informed the committee that since 2010, the Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLLO) has worked with state policymakers to enact over 600 bills that make life better for the military community (slide 1). Three of their ten key issues for 2019 revolve around military spouse licensure: occupational licensing compacts, military spouse teacher licensure, and licensure law and implementation (slide 2). She said that occupational licensing became intensely focused on when a letter was sent to the National Governors Association from the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of the Air Force saying that they would consider reciprocity of professional licensure when they looked at future basing and mission decisions (slide 3). They felt like this mattered because 68 percent of married service members report their spouse's ability to maintain a career impacts their decision to remain in the military. Furthermore, 77 percent of military spouses reported wanting or needing work while 15.2 percent of them annually move from state to state (slide 4). She explained that this is particularly important to Alaska because military spouses make up 2 percent of the state's population, which is higher than every state other than Hawaii and Virginia (slide 5). She addressed compacts, which are agreements between states to share a law that ensures the same licensure process for certain professions. Several key compacts are the Physical Therapy License Compact, Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC), REPLICA - Emergency Medical Services Compact, and the PSYPACT - Psychological Interjurisdictional Compact (slide 10).

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER sought clarification on the percentage of military spouses. He asked if that accounts for active duty military spouses or if it is a combination of National Guard, Coast Guard, etcetera.

MS. PERREAULT confirmed that they are active duty military spouses.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked how Alaska stacks up compared to the rest of the country "on services that we provided for the military on a whole."

MS. PERREAULT said it's a challenging question because there is always a great amount of ambiguity and the answer will vary depending on who you ask; however, Alaska continues to be a progressive state in seeking to meet the needs of the military.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked how many states honor the reciprocity of professional licensure.

MS. PERREAULT said that, for example, the enhance nurse licensure compact provides reciprocity for nurse licensure between 31 states, while the psychology compact provides reciprocity between nine states. She noted that compacts provide the most clear-cut reciprocity.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER speculated that reciprocity is variable depending on the type of license.

MS. PERREAULT affirmed that.

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REPRESENTATIVE TUCK read the following from a letter to the National Governors Association [included in the committee packet]:

Facilitating military spouses in continuing their work in a new place of residence without delays or extra expenses is also important. Spouses in professionally licensed fields such as medical, legal, engineering, education, accounting or the cosmetic arts face challenges due to delays or costs of transferring licenses to a new state or jurisdiction. Eliminating or mitigating these barriers will help improve quality

of life for our military families and ease the stress of transferring duty stations with consideration for long-term career implications.

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**HB 93-MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE**

[1:48:19 PM](#)

CHAIR LEDOUX announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 93, "An Act relating to temporary courtesy licenses for certain nonresident professionals; and relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development."

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REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, paraphrased parts of the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read in its entirety as follows [original punctuation provided]:

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 toward fulfilling any remainder 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 will 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 last year 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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CHAIR LEDOUX noted that a bill for temporary courtesy licensing had already been passed several years ago. She asked if the current bill is attempting to ensure that the program that was enacted years ago is working the way it should be.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK answered yes.

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REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON sought clarification on the fiscal note.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK stated that the fiscal note shows zero costs through FY 25. He explained that "the total amount of revenue collected approximately equals the occupations actual regulatory costs", adding that those individuals seeking occupational licenses are not exempt from paying the fees.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK added that when a military family moves to Alaska and the spouse can no longer continue her career because her occupation requires a license, it is a loss of higher income and revenue for that family. He emphasized the importance of HB 93 and explained why Alaska no longer has a reciprocity agreement for electrician licenses with Washington.

CHAIR LEDOUX sought clarification on why the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED) would evaluate themselves in an annual report on the progress of making temporary courtesy occupational licenses available to the spouses of active duty service members stationed in Alaska. She asked why Legislative Budget and Audit Committee (LBA) wouldn't compile an audit instead.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK agreed that if DCCED didn't desire the same outcome it would be a function of LBA. He noted that it takes two years and 500-900 man-hours for a typical audit, while the current bill institutes an annual report that requires less resources and allows for a quicker response.

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REPRESENTATIVE TARR, referencing subsection (f) of the current bill, asked for clarification on the purpose of the biennial report, which is a consolidation of the two most recent annual reports, that would be submitted to the legislature during the first regular session of each legislature.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK offered his understanding that the purpose of the biennial report is to provide a compilation of the last two years of information on temporary courtesy licenses for brand new legislators.

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CHAIR LEDOUX opened public testimony.

[2:01:35 PM](#)

SARA CHAMBERS, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, reiterated that the DCCED prioritizes military families and would be happy to provide a progress report to the legislature. She offered her belief that that the items in HB 93 that would be reported on wouldn't take much effort and could be accommodated without adding a fiscal note. She noted that the DCB&PL doesn't regulate teachers or attorneys and that education, along with any occupation outside of the division, isn't included in the report.

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TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison, Defense-State Liaison Office, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, informed the committee that the U.S. Department of Defense is grateful to the Alaska legislature for making great strides to improve the transition of military members and families. She stated that HB 93 will continue to provide an evaluation of the progress which Alaska has made and allow a firm commitment and identification of the next best steps. She acknowledged that different licensing requirements can limit advancement or deter reentry into the workforce in a new location, and that sometimes spouses can suffer periods of unemployment due to licensure requirements. She offered her belief that HB 93 will help identify if there are any gaps in the current system and will help moved Alaska forward in identifying possible processes that could be improved on. She concluded by expressing her support for the policy within the current bill.

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CHAIR LEDOUX closed public testimony.

[HB 93 was held over.]

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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 [2:06] p.m.