

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

May 13, 2021

3:10 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Chris Tuck, Chair
Representative Andi Story
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Matt Claman
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Laddie Shaw
Representative David Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 12

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

- MOVED SB 12 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 12

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KAWASAKI

01/22/21	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
01/22/21	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/21	(S)	STA, L&C
03/04/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/04/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/04/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/11/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/11/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/11/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
04/22/21	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/22/21	(S)	Moved SB 12 Out of Committee
04/22/21	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
04/23/21	(S)	STA RPT 3DP 1NR

04/23/21 (S) DP: SHOWER, KAWASAKI, COSTELLO
04/23/21 (S) NR: HOLLAND
04/26/21 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/26/21 (S) Moved SB 12 Out of Committee
04/26/21 (S) MINUTE(L&C)
04/28/21 (S) L&C RPT 3DP
04/28/21 (S) DP: COSTELLO, REVAK, GRAY-JACKSON
05/03/21 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
05/03/21 (S) VERSION: SB 12
05/04/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/04/21 (H) STA, L&C
05/06/21 (H) MLV REPLACES STA REFERRAL
05/11/21 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
05/11/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
05/12/21 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
05/12/21 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
05/13/21 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

JOE HAYES, Staff
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 12 and read the sponsor statement on behalf of Senator Kawasaki, prime sponsor.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office
U.S. Department of Defense
Olympia, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 12.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:10:05 PM](#)

CHAIR CHRIS TUCK called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. Representatives Claman, Rauscher, Tarr, Nelson, and Tuck were present at the call to order. Representatives Shaw and Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 12-MILITARY SPOUSE COURTESY LICENSE

[3:10:52 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK announced that the only order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 12, "An Act relating to temporary courtesy licenses for military spouses; and relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development."

[3:11:21 PM](#)

JOE HAYES, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Legislature, introduced SB 12 on behalf of Senator Kawasaki, prime sponsor, and read the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet] as follows [original punctuation provided]:

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.

[3:15:04 PM](#)

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison, Defense-State Liaison Office, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), testified in support of SB 12 on behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community & Family Policy. She said that the proposed legislation would support significant DoD priorities for occupational licensing boards to ensure licenses are appropriately processed for military spouses. She expressed that the reporting requirements under SB 12 would help DoD assess the actions of licensing boards, as well as encourage any appropriate implementation of changes to law and regulatory policy. She said that the Defense-State Liaison Office, in a 2017 study done by the University of Minnesota, found specific limitations to Alaska's current expedited licensure process such as board staff not being aware of legislation that supports licensure portability, lack of unique processes for military spouses, and limited available information. Since 2017, she said, the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional

Licensing in the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED) has worked hard to address the shortcomings, including significantly reducing the processing time for military spouses. She expressed that without the appropriate supporting legislation, continuing the effort to improve Alaska's process for military spouse licensure could be hindered; the concern has been communicated to the governor by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. She said that half of all military personnel are married, and military spouse employment and its associated personal and financial well-being is an important component in servicemember retention, with 88 percent of military spouses reporting that they either want or need to work. Military spouses are highly influential regarding a servicemember's decision to remain in the service, she said, and over 28 percent of servicemembers reported that their decision to leave the military would "largely or moderately" be affected by their spouse's career prospects. Ms. Perrault noted that consideration of a spouse's licensure is required when making "basing decisions," and she stressed that military families often require two incomes.

[3:17:58 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK opened public testimony on SB 12. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[3:18:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON expressed his appreciation of the proposed legislation and said that the consideration of a spouse's career is "deeply meaningful" to the servicemembers in his district.

[3:19:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR noted that, under the proposed legislation, DCCED would be required to submit a report to the Joint Armed Services Committee (JASC) each year on March 1, which, she said, doesn't leave much time in a legislative session for identifying policy priorities that may result from the report.

[3:20:23 PM](#)

MR. HAYES replied that he would find out why that date was chosen.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR offered her understanding that the JASC typically meets in March, so in the interest of being able to

make any needed improvements, it might be prudent to consider an earlier date.

[3:21:18 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:22:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR moved to report SB 12 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note.

[3:23:08 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK objected for purposes of discussion.

[3:23:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed her gratitude to Senator Kawasaki for sponsoring SB 12 and to DCCED for recognizing the importance of the proposed legislation.

[3:23:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER expressed his support for SB 12.

[3:23:58 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK removed his objection. There being no further objection, SB 12 was reported from the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[3:24:40 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.