



North Dakota Senate

State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

Senator
Scott Meyer
District 18
1624 Seventh Avenue North
Grand Forks, ND 58203-3010
218-791-7655
scottmeyer@nd.gov

Committees:
Finance and Taxation
Government and Veterans
Affairs

January 18, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee, SB 2175 is the 2nd bill dealing with Military Spouse Licensure Reciprocity and is meant to correct a few issues that were caught with the passing of SB 2306 last legislative session.

Some history as to why we are here, The Department of Defense has recently taken a stronger stance on quality of life initiatives for military members and their families. Quality education and licensure portability are two metrics that have been prioritized when the DOD considers base realignment, base retention, and for strategic basing decisions. SB 2306 accomplished many of our goals, but the DOD came back wanting us to address 43-51-11.1, Section 1, Subsection A of Century Code.

In attached email correspondence, Mr. Jason Vandenberg, Chief of the Airman and Family Care Division at the Pentagon, scored this section as “yellow” because of the following language:

“Which must include experience in the occupation or profession for at least two of the four years preceding the date of application under this section”

Their reasoning was that military members and their spouses could be PCS’d or transferred multiple times over four years or they may be stationed overseas, thus creating a barrier for licensure.

We removed that language while still allowing the boards to ensure occupational competency through their methods and standards.

I have attached a second email from Mr. Vandenberg to Barry Wilfhart, the Grand Forks Chamber President, after he had a chance to review the draft of SB 2175, and he believes the removal of the above language addresses their concerns of the requirement of 2 of the preceding 4 years.

Mr. Vandenberg also stated:

“There are many ways to remove barriers to support the desired outcome of quick, efficient, military spouse career portability, the use of expedited licensing and recognition of licenses from other jurisdiction are two great pathways that I see in your proposed legislation.”

Mr. Chairman, we've also defined Military Member in SB 2175. The reason for this was to clear any ambiguity from the passage of SB 2306 and to make sure military members and spouses are both included for licensing portability. Military members are required to maintain their license status. Additionally, it's another opportunity for our state to assist as military members separate from service and transition into their civilian career. Many Veterans are highly skilled employees and the state benefits by retaining these skilled employees to help fill workforce needs. However, these military members still have to qualify for all the licensure provisions that were passed in SB 2306.

Finally, you'll notice in section 5 and section 6, two different reporting requirements. Section 5 deals with the gathering of data for the Department of Defense. Each state provides data to the DOD every November regarding Education, Workforce Issues, etc. It will help identify what seems to be working well or if there are any issues that need to be addressed.

Section 6 is similar to SB 2306 as it is one report to determine whether the laws and rules are consistent with this act.

As of August, 2020, there have been 58 military spouses that received a license in their occupation and only one received a provisional license. This tells me that our boards are doing a great job on licensing, and this bill shouldn't affect much. The passage of SB 2175 is meant to help get our state into the Green ranking with the Department of Defense.

The road to perfection is always under construction, but this bill addresses the concerns of Mr. Vandenberg, keeps assisting workforce development, and also provides valuable data for the state.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Education committee, I ask for a favorable recommendation and I'll stand for any questions.

From: Bruce Gjovig <bruce@gjovig.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 5:19 PM
To: Sheldon, Jay G MAJ USARMY NG NDARNG (USA)
Cc: Meyer, Scott; Linda Inman
Subject: : Support of Military Families. - Base Rankings

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Jay,

Barry Wilfahrt, GF Chamber President, had a phone conversation with the Jason Vandenberg (address below) on License Portability rankings for ND. He told Barry the reason that North Dakota scored a "yellow" was because of Section 6 of SB 2306 which says, "The military spouse demonstrates competency in the occupation or profession through methods or standards determined by the board which much include experience in the occupation or profession for at least two of the four years preceding the date of application under this section; and"

That caveat of active practice for 2 of 4 years before the application was the sole reason the yellow rating. In his estimation, if that language was removed, we would be rated "green." I hope that is true. On the sheet from the USAF for Grand Forks AFB, Minot, and National Guard, the footnote does note "the 2/4 years before application.

I have copied Sen. Meyer on this email to see if that is "doable."

Bruce

Mr. Jason Vandenberg
Chief, Airman and Family Care Division
Headquarters, Air Force
Pentagon 4D1054
302.310.0596 (telework)
jason.vandenberg@us.af.mil

From: "VANDENBERG, JASON T GS-15 USAF HAF AF/AF/A1SA"
<jason.vandenberg@us.af.mil>
Date: January 11, 2021 at 10:25:17 AM CST
To: Barry Wilfahrt <barry@gochamber.org>
Subject: RE: (Sen. Meyer) Relating to occupational licensure of members of the military and military spouses – LC# 21.0565.02000

Thanks for the note Mr. Wilfahrt—

Thanks again for taking the time this summer to discuss ways that we could further partnerships between the Air Force and your community regarding licensure portability for military spouses.

I have reviewed the proposed legislation and believe Section 4, 1.A removes our previous area of concern of the requirement for licensure in 2 of the preceding 4 years in the jurisdiction military spouses were relocating from.

There are many ways to remove barriers to support the desired outcome of quick, efficient, military spouse career portability, the use of expedited licensing and recognition of licenses from other jurisdiction are two great pathways that I see in your proposed legislation.

Thanks for continuing this discussion and let me know if you have any further questions!

V/r
Jason

Mr. Jason Vandenberg
Chief, Airman and Family Care Division
Headquarters, Air Force Services
Pentagon 4D1054
302.310.0596 (telework)