



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

January 30, 2023

The Honorable Lori Houghton
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

RE: HB 62, An Act Relating to the Interstate Counseling Compact

Dear Chairwoman Houghton and Honorable Committee Members:

The Department of Defense requests your consideration of policy changes proposed in Vermont House Bill 62, An Act Relating to the Interstate Counseling Compact. Interstate compacts are the Department's optimum end state for license portability and military family agility.

My name is Melissa Willette. I am the New England Regional Liaison for the United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Our mission is to serve as a resource for state leaders, elected officials, and stakeholders regarding issues of national significance affecting military families.

The Interstate Counseling Compact will benefit not only those who are professionally licensed counselors, the Compact will also benefit the clients in need of such services. Said benefits will be attained by allowing military spouses to maintain their certifications with each change of duty station; increasing client access to care, which also ensures continuity of care; enhancing accountability in regard to information exchanged among member states; and eliminating the need for licenses in multiple states.

For a military spouse, the unknowns of moving to the next duty station with their service member can be daunting. Uprooting a family across the country is incredibly stressful, and the policies reflected in HB 62 will provide military spouses with a sense of relief and ease if barriers to their professional development are removed.

We would like to thank the Green Mountain State for their continued support of our service members, veterans, and their families. Should you have any questions regarding HB 62, I would be happy to assist in any way I can.

Respectfully,

MELISSA WILLETTE
New England Regional Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office

CC: Members of the House Committee on Health Care
Representative Lori Houghton
Representative David Durfee
Robert E. Burke, Director, Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs
Maj. Gen. Gregory Knight, the Adjutant General of Vermont