



MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

## OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Virginia Lyons  
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, Chair  
241 White Birch Lane  
Williston, VT 05495

RE: SB48 – An act relating to Vermont’s adoption of the interstate Nurse Licensure Compact

Dear Senator Lyons and Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense, I am writing to provide comment regarding the policy changes proposed in Vermont SB48 / H99, the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC), which addresses licensing issues affecting our service members and their families. I would like to thank you for sponsoring this issue in the 2021 session and considering it before your Committee.

My name is Christopher Arnold. I am the Northeast Regional Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy. Our mission is to be a resource to state policymakers as they work to address quality of life issues of military families.

The DoD has partnered with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) to support the NLC, which enhances opportunities of portable careers for both service members and military spouses by providing consistent rules which allow licensed members to work in other states through “privilege to practice policies”, or more easily transfer their license to a new state.

Like American families as a whole, military families often require two incomes to achieve their aspirations. Frequent moves can inhibit separating service members and military spouses’ ability to start and sustain a career. Differing licensing requirements can limit advancement or deter re-entry into the workforce at a new location. Spouses and veterans might suffer long periods of unemployment and, therefore, loss of needed income to stabilize a family. Spouses and veterans are unemployed and underemployed at a higher rate than their civilian counterparts.

The burdensome process of applying for a single state license at each duty station results in missing out on months of work in the process. Barriers to the transfer and acceptance of certifications and licenses that occur when state rules differ can have a dramatic and negative effect on the financial well-being of military families. Military spouses routinely lose six to nine months of income during a military move as they try to reinstate their careers. As with civilian families, military families depend more and more on two incomes.

Removing these barriers, creating reciprocity in licensing requirements, and facilitating placement opportunities can help a military family’s financial stability, speed the assimilation of the family into its new location, and create a desirable new employee pool for a state (especially in education and health care). Enacting the NLC will serve to relieve one of the many stressors of a military move by allowing service members and military spouses to more easily maintain their profession when relocating. We are hopeful that the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare will report it favorably to the Senate floor.

We appreciate the opportunity to support the policies outlined in the NLC introduced this session and for your sponsorship of this important piece of legislation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

**CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD**  
Northeast Region Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare  
Senator Ann Cummings, Cosponsor  
Senator Jane Kitchel, Cosponsor