



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR**  
**1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500**

**MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS**

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Matthew Birong, Chair  
The Honorable Lisa Hango, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

RE: An act relating to adoption of the Interstate Massage Compact (H.623 and H.625)

Dear Chairman Birong,

I am writing today regarding H. 623 and H.625, regarding the Interstate Massage Compact, which is being considered by the Government Oversight and Military Affairs Committee.

Compacts are state-to-state agreements which allow states to work collaboratively without the interference of the federal government. Vermont is a member of forty-seven (47) compacts<sup>1</sup> including seven occupational licensure compacts recognized by the DoW to improve licensure portability for military spouses.<sup>2</sup> Federal law recognizes the benefit of occupational licensure compacts by requiring a military member or spouse to utilize an operational compact to transfer a license between participating states.<sup>3</sup>

In the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, DoW was authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments (CSG) to develop occupational licensure compacts.<sup>4</sup> Massage therapy was one of the first professions selected of the ten compacts developed to facilitate military spouse licensure portability.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://compacts.csg.org/database/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/state/GA>

<sup>3</sup> 50 USC Ch. 50: Servicemember Civil Relief Act §4025a. Portability of professional licenses of servicemembers and their spouses <http://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=136&page=6137>

<sup>4</sup> 10 USC Ch. 88, Sub Ch. I, §1784 (h) <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section1784&num=0&edition=prelim>

Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific professional licensing requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment, with thirty-six percent requiring a state license to practice in their professions and an annual cross-state relocation rate more than ten times higher than their civilian counterparts.

Accordingly, military spouses experience unemployment and underemployment at significantly higher rates than their civilian peers.

The Department is grateful for the enduring and steadfast support Vermont provides our military families, and we appreciate tremendously your consideration and deliberation of this policy.

I stand ready to answer any questions you may have and can be reached at [melissa.j.willette3.civ@mail.mil](mailto:melissa.j.willette3.civ@mail.mil) or (703) 623-2035, if I can be of assistance.

Melissa J Willette  
New England Regional Liaison  
(CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)  
Defense-State Liaison Office

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<sup>5</sup> <https://messagecompact.csg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Message-Compact-Language-FINAL.docx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://messagecompact.csg.org/>