

Chair Perales, Vice Chair Hood, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Armed Services and Veteran Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 7, a bill that will mandate temporary license for professional occupations for Active Duty military members and their spouses.

My husband and the absolute love of my life, First Lieutenant Monte McKinnon, is currently an Electrical Engineer in the United States Air Force. Since before we first met almost ten years ago, my husband has wanted to be a pilot. We have worked very hard and I am proud to say that he has recently taken a position in Tacoma, Washington as a C-17 pilot. We will be moving to Oklahoma in just a few short months to attend training. After completing training, my husband will be a C-17 Pilot in the Guard Reserves. Why Guard Reserve you may ask? The Guard Reserve provides the opportunity for each of us to follow our dreams as we are stationed in one location for the duration of his military service. If he were to fly for Active Duty, I would be unable to work for years at a time due to a lack of education licensure reciprocity among states. So no matter where we moved to, I will have a constant uphill battle to achieve my own dream of teaching.

I grew up in a small town that people have to fight to get out of. It took me years of hard work and discipline to stand here with you now. I was raised with little to no education and dropped out of school when I was thirteen, I was a teen mom, and I was surrounded by addiction. I tell you this because working with troubled youth is not just a job for me, it is my calling. I have been in college for eight years now, building knowledge to support my personal experience so that I am able to live my life making sure that children feel empowered to make their own dreams come true. Last year I was

able to work in a school most people wouldn't, fighting for kids who fought me back just as hard. By the end of the year, my classroom had gone from a room full of students of continual self destruction to students who were making plans for big things. Sadly, Ohio only gave me one year to make a difference and I had to say goodbye to my middle schoolers because I was unable to meet the Ohio State Reciprocity requirements, which would have cost my family upwards of \$4,000 dollars and at least a year of coursework and testing. This was extremely frustrating considering I am nearly completed with my Masters Degree in Special Education at this time.

Over the last two years I have had the privilege to work alongside some amazing people regarding this bill. I have built many friendships with fellow military spouses who are brought to tears as they tell me their story of loss for their own careers. I have spent the holidays with a friend who currently works as a hostess at a pizza place despite her current degree in Criminal Justice. I have built what I consider to be a friendship with State Representative Perales, who has shared with me his own stories. Last but certainly not least, two weeks ago I shared breakfast with Leah Esper, the current Secretary of Defense's wife, and we discussed this bill. She later sent me an email thanking me for pursuing this so diligently because she recognizes how world changing this will be for so many.

Moving around fighting a broken system has brought my family to its knees. We will be sacrificing a life of Active Duty and all of its benefits so I am able to do what I have been called to do. We hope by making this decision for our family, our two beautiful children will learn to fight for what brings them purpose. I appreciate the options the military provides, as they have allowed my husband to follow his dreams and me follow mine

alongside him. We will be sad to see Active Duty life go, as it has been an amazing chapter in our lives.

It is for this reason, among many more, that I request the favorable consideration of Senate Bill 7. Chair Perales, Vice Chair Hood, and Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Armed Services and Veteran Affairs Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and will answer any questions you may have.