

**House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Senate Bill 7  
Proponent Testimony  
15 October 2019**

Chairman Perales, Vice Chair Hood, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 7.

My name is Jermaine Ferguson and I am the legislative coordinator for The American Legion Department of Ohio.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is a leading veterans-service organization within the state, with a membership of over 90,000 wartime veterans. The American Legions' positions represent the views of its' members and are based on our four pillars: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.



The American Legion through Resolution No. 338, *Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans, and Spouses* supports the following efforts:

1. To eliminate employment barriers that impede the timely and successful transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market.
2. To eliminate spouse employment barriers through the recognition and acceptance of spouse's credentials regardless of location, if their credentials meet standards set forth by the credentialing board.
3. To bring federal and state stakeholders together in order to take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers and veterans be trained, tested, evaluated, in order to obtain any credential that may be required in the local civilian workforce.
4. That increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the training, education, and prior experience provided by the Armed Forces. <sup>1</sup>

In 2017, The American Legion published a report titled, *The State of Credentialing of Service Members and Veterans*.<sup>2</sup> This report focused on the various challenges faced by Service members and veterans in attaining civilian occupational credentials and identified eight opportunities for action - which includes working with state legislatures to reduce state licensure barriers for service members, veterans, and military spouses.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Legion Resolution No. 338 (Aug. 2016): Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses

<sup>2</sup> The American Legion The State of Credentialing of Service Members (Feb. 2017)



Senate Bill 7 creates a process that will significantly help eliminate employment barriers of active-duty service members and military spouses who transition to the State of Ohio. Senate Bill 7 offers an efficient and timely system to issue a temporary state occupational license or certificate to an individual who is licensed and in good standing in another jurisdiction.

Upon receiving PCS orders, military families discuss possible paths forward: Does the entire family unit make the transition together or will the servicemember leave their family behind? When a military family can identify a timely and efficient occupational licensing pathway that allows the spouse to continue in their career field, the chance of that the family transitioning together significantly increase.

Military readiness and retention are directly impacted when military families experience the stress of separation, the stress of financial strain or the stress caused by a loss of career momentum that a spouse may experience due to the lack of reciprocity of state occupational licensing. Senate Bill 7 will have a positive impact on military readiness and retention of our active and reserve units located within the State of Ohio.

Chairman Perales, Vice Chair Hood, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 7.