

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

May 31, 2016

Dear Senator Casey and Senator Moran,

The undersigned associations thank you for introducing Senate Amendment 4292 to the National Defense Authorization Bill (S. 2943), authorizing DoD to reimburse costs of professional re-licensure and re-certification for military spouses after a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to a new state. Military spouses are integral to military readiness, providing emotional and financial stability to our servicemembers' families. Maintaining consistent employment remains a major challenge for military spouses due to the frequency of PCS moves, and the costs and requirements associated with preparing for employment in a new location.

In 2013, the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and the Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) found that more than 50% of military spouses required state-unique licensing or certification for employment in their career field. When spouses face barriers to licensure or certification upon a PCS to a new state, they are often forced into jobs for which they are overqualified. The MOAA/IVMF study found that military spouses earn an average of 38% less than their civilian counterparts. This impacts long term earnings and the financial stability of military families.

The loss of income as well as the costs associated with becoming relicensed under new standards in the state of the new duty station place additional financial burdens on military families. Just this week, Blue Star Families released a study that estimates the social cost of this underemployment and unemployment of military spouses to be between \$710 million to \$1.07 billion annually. In the current fiscal environment, we can't afford to let this continue.

Military spouses are tremendous assets to both their communities and our nation, and they hope to contribute their skills wherever the government decides to relocate their family to meet the needs of the military. Providing reimbursement for re-licensing and re-certification in the new state would ease the financial burden associated with gainful employment and get spouses back into the job market as quickly as possible following a military-directed relocation. The routine and predictability of another paycheck help to stabilize military families and contribute to military readiness.

The following organizations support SA 4292, and we hope for the bipartisan and bicameral support of this important amendment.

Air Force Association (AFA)

American Military Partners Association (AMPA)
American Veterans (AMVETS)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)
Blue Star Families
Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association (CGSPOA)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)
Jewish War Veterans (JWV)
Marine Corps League (MCL)
Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)
Military Chaplains Association (MCA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Spouse eMentor
Military Spouse Foundation
Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN)
Military Spouse JD Network (MSJDN)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Milspo Project
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)