

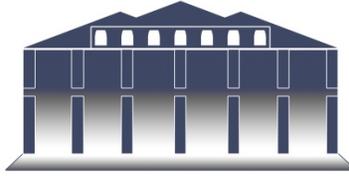
**Opportunities Exist to Further Ease Burdens on  
Military-Trained Applicants and Military Spouses in  
Obtaining Occupational Licensure**



**Final Report to the Joint Legislative  
Program Evaluation Oversight Committee**

**Report Number 2020-01**

**February 24, 2020**



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**NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
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*John W. Turcotte*  
Director

February 24, 2020

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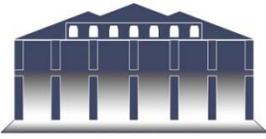
Session Law 2019-201 directed the Program Evaluation Division, in consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, to study the extent to which the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 have improved the ability of military-trained applicants and military spouses to become licensed by occupational licensing boards in North Carolina.

I am pleased to report that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and occupational licensing boards cooperated with us fully and were at all times courteous to our evaluators during the evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Turcotte".

John W. Turcotte  
Director



# PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

## NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 2020

Report No. 2020-01

## Opportunities Exist to Further Ease Burdens on Military-Trained Applicants and Military Spouses in Obtaining Occupational Licensure

### Highlights

**IN BRIEF:** Military veterans and their spouses face unique challenges in obtaining occupational licensure. The provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 are intended to ease these burdens. Use of the statute has increased since implementation, yet opportunities exist to further assist members of the military community as they transition to civilian life or undertake relocation. Specifically, North Carolina could begin providing expedited licensure for military spouses and boards could better disseminate information on military licensure provisions. Other potential legislative actions include directing licensing boards to collect and report information on military-trained applicants and military spouse applicants.

**BACKGROUND:** Occupational licensing regulations can be difficult to navigate for military service members transitioning to the civilian workforce. Service members on active duty often receive extensive training that is approximately equivalent to the credentials required to secure civilian employment, yet lengthy licensure processes can place undue burdens on military applicants. For military spouses, frequent moves between states often mean reapplying for licensure every few years. Session Law 2019-201 directed the North Carolina General Assembly's Program Evaluation Division, in consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, to study the extent to which the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 have improved the ability of military-trained applicants and military spouses to become licensed by occupational licensing boards in the state.

**North Carolina has implemented two of three recommended best practices for military spouse licensure.** In 2012, the United States Department of the Treasury and Department of Defense laid out three best practice recommendations to ease the burdens of occupational licensure transfer faced by military spouses: licensure by endorsement, temporary or provisional licensure, and an expedited licensure application process.

The General Assembly has enacted legislation related to the first two of these three best practices, requiring occupational licensing boards to implement licensure by endorsement and to provide temporary or provisional licensure for military spouses. North Carolina is one of nine states to implement these two provisions but not offer an expedited licensure application process. Rather than wait for a temporary license to be processed, an expedited process would allow military spouses to begin working immediately.

## Highlights

**Recommendation:**

The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to implement an expedited application process for military spouses.

**There is no requirement for occupational licensing boards to promote N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1.** Occupational licensing boards are not required to make veterans and military spouses aware of the opportunities and benefits provided by the statute such as the waiver of application fees. Although the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses seeking licensure using the statutory provisions has increased since implementation, several military advocacy groups reported being unaware of this legislation in interviews with the Program Evaluation Division.

**Recommendation:**

The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to promote military licensure provisions so that military-trained applicants and military spouses are aware of the opportunities the legislation provides.

**Stakeholders in the military community feel the application of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 is important and should be tracked.** PED interviewed five military advocacy groups during this review and each group indicated it was in favor of establishing a reporting requirement to track the number of military-trained applicants and military spouse applicants.

Boards do not generally support introducing a requirement that they report on the number of military-trained applicants or military spouses who apply for licensure or are denied licensure under the military-specific provisions. However, tracking this information would allow the General Assembly to better monitor use of the statute.

**Recommendation:**

The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to annually report on (i) the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who were licensed pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 and (ii) the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who were denied licensure.

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## Purpose and Scope

Session Law 2019-201 directed the Program Evaluation Division, in consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), to study the extent to which the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 (also referenced throughout this report as “military licensure provisions”) have improved the ability of military-trained applicants and military spouses to become licensed by occupational licensing boards in North Carolina.

The General Assembly directed the Program Evaluation Division to consider, among other things, the following:

1. Whether criteria in the military licensure provisions should be expanded to allow for the licensure of more military-trained applicants and military spouses.
2. The effectiveness of publishing information on the criteria for licensure of military spouses, as required by the provisions, and whether there are additional platforms on which this information should be published to ensure broader dissemination to military spouses.
3. The feasibility and effectiveness of including a question about military status, including status as a military spouse, on applications for licensure.
4. Determining what steps can be taken to provide or enhance continuing education programs to assist military spouses in maintaining an active occupational license, even if issued by another state.
5. Providing training for at least one employee in DMVA on the licensure process outlined in the provisions for military-trained applicants and military spouses and considering ways to disseminate information about this employee's availability to applicants.
6. Whether to develop a process for annually gathering data from all occupational licensing boards on the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who (i) were licensed pursuant to the military licensure provisions or under the existing licensure, certification, or registration requirements established by occupational licensing boards and (ii) were denied licensure. The data shall include a summary of the reasons military-trained applicants and military spouses were denied licensure but shall not disclose any identifying information about any applicant.

The Program Evaluation Division collected data from several sources, including

- review of laws governing the regulation and reporting requirements of occupational licensing boards;
- review of professional literature on occupational licensing boards and on veterans and active duty military spouses;
- survey of 54 occupational licensing boards in North Carolina;
- queries of DMVA;
- interviews with several advocacy groups for veterans and active duty military spouses; and

- review of prior legislative study efforts regarding this subject matter area.

The Program Evaluation Division solicited input from 54 occupational licensing boards regarding the subtopics directed for study by Session Law 2019-201. In general, boards indicated that continuing education is the purview of professional associations, not the boards themselves, and felt that existing continuing education programs for all potential applicants cover the needs of military spouses. Boards were mixed on the subtopic of whether a question on military status should be included on applications for licensure. Also, boards were mixed regarding whether at least one employee in DMVA should be trained as a single point of contact on the licensure process outlined in the provisions for military-trained applicants and military spouses. Survey data and select board responses are presented in Appendix A.

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## Background

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**The General Assembly has enacted laws to regulate many of the occupations that provide goods and services to North Carolina's citizens.**

Occupations are regulated in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- ensure that the public is protected from unscrupulous, incompetent, and/or unethical practitioners;
- offer some assurance to the public that the regulated individual is competent to provide certain services in a safe and effective manner; and
- provide a means by which individuals who fail to comply with the profession's standards can be disciplined.

**The level of regulatory restriction imposed upon an occupation depends on the perceived level of threat to the public of unregulated practice.** As shown in Exhibit 1, the three levels of regulation, in decreasing order of restriction, are licensure, certification, and registration. For certain occupations, more restrictive forms of regulation may not be necessary to provide an acceptable level of protection. The three identified forms of occupational regulation are intended to help achieve the same objectives but exercise varying levels of restriction on the ability of individuals to work in a given occupation. Determination of the most appropriate form of regulation for each profession is generally made based on the perception of potential threat to public health, safety, and welfare.

### Exhibit 1

Three Forms of Occupational Regulation Exist, Varying in Level of Restriction

Level of Restriction	Form of Occupational Regulation	Risk to Public Welfare	Characteristics
	Licensure	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibits anyone from engaging in the activities covered by a “scope of practice” without permission from a government agency</li> <li>Can be used to deny individuals the legal opportunity to earn livelihoods in their chosen fields</li> </ul>
	Certification	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants individuals the authority to use a protected occupational title but does not include a legal scope of practice</li> <li>Individuals not certified may practice but may not use the protected title</li> </ul>
	Registration	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires individuals to list contact information with a designated government agency</li> <li>As a general rule, the associated statutes do not require the individual to meet predetermined standards or pass an examination</li> </ul>

Note: Scope of practice describes the procedures, actions, and processes that a practitioner is permitted to undertake in keeping with the terms of a professional license.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information provided by occupational licensing boards.

**North Carolina law requires licensure as a condition for working in many occupations.** It is estimated that 25% of occupations in the United States require licensure. The primary purpose of professional licensing is to ensure the public is protected from unskilled, incompetent, or unethical practitioners. To achieve this goal, the designated regulatory entity is

responsible for ensuring qualified individuals enter the profession and adhere to established standards of professional conduct.

Regulation of licensed occupations is accomplished through licensure and enforcement functions, which are conducted by occupational licensing boards and are described below.

**Licensure.** Licensure involves establishing minimum educational and/or experience requirements for prospective licensees, establishing requirements for continued maintenance of licensed status for approved practitioners, and assessing fees to fund regulatory activities. The requirements for obtaining a license vary from occupation to occupation but usually include some combination of the following:

- prescribed formal education;
- experience or apprenticeship;
- examination;
- good moral character; and
- citizenship or residency.

**Enforcement.** A second major function of occupational licensing boards is enforcement of the occupation's laws, rules, and professional standards. Allegations of violations of associated laws, rules, and professional standards are most often identified through complaints received from the public and other professionals. Potential violations also may be identified internally from evidence uncovered during inspections, complaint investigations, or self-disclosed information provided by licensees. Occupational licensing boards are responsible for investigating these allegations and, depending on the outcome of the investigation, may act to suspend or revoke a license to practice or attach conditions on the right to practice.

**Occupational licensing regulations can be difficult for transitioning military service members and their spouses to navigate.** Veterans and military spouses have extensive skills, experiences, and leadership abilities, yet many struggle to find and maintain employment. For veterans, it can be difficult to translate their skills to the civilian workforce and market themselves to employers. For military spouses, challenges arise from frequent moves and childcare responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

Both groups face difficulties in navigating state occupational licensing regulations. Service members on active duty often receive extensive training that prepares them for a wide range of occupations and which is approximately equivalent to the credentials required to secure civilian employment, yet lengthy licensure processes can place undue burdens on military applicants. These barriers come at a cost to both transitioning service members and to taxpayers. For military spouses, frequent moves between states often mean reapplying for licensure every few years. With every move, the reapplication process results in lost income for the family

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<sup>1</sup> Winters, A., Stephens, R., & Schultz, J. (2018). *Barriers to Work: Improving Access to Licensed Occupations for Veterans and Military Spouses*. National Conference of State Legislatures.

and lost tax revenue for the government, as applicants cannot begin working in their new state until licensure has been granted.

Many states have modified licensing requirements in recent years in order to better support military spouses and transitioning service members and remove unnecessary burdens for veterans and their families. The United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) works with states to provide legislation to allow or require occupational licensing boards to apply military training, education, and experience towards occupational licensure requirements for transitioning service members. DSLO also has worked with states to institute policies and practices that reduce barriers to licensure for military spouses. In 2017, DSLO contracted with the University of Minnesota on a research study to evaluate state occupational licensing boards' implementation of laws and policies to support military spouses. The review found that boards in many states were not accessible and did not provide information on military spouse license portability on their websites, and that board staff were often not aware of legislation pertaining to military spouse applicants.

### **Veterans**

There are about 19 million veterans living in the United States today, 707,000 of them in North Carolina. As shown in Exhibit 2, North Carolina ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in terms of total number of veterans living in the state. Of the 10 states with the most veterans, North Carolina ranks second to Virginia in terms of per capita population of veterans. A large number of veterans who are employed by the federal government and work in Washington, D.C. reside in Virginia. In a 2017 survey conducted by Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, 37% of employed participants considered themselves to be underemployed. Lack of skills is unlikely to be the primary culprit for underemployment, as veterans return to the civilian workforce with training for a variety of occupations and professions. The United States Department of Labor estimates that the military trains service members in skills applicable to at least 962 civilian occupations. Among other fields, the Department of Defense has trained active duty enlisted personnel in construction, health care, electronic and electrical equipment repair, and engineering and mechanics. Many veterans also are trained in occupations not often associated with military service, such as human resources development or media and public affairs.

**Exhibit 2**

North Carolina Ranks 7<sup>th</sup>  
Among All States in  
Number of Veterans

Rank	State	Total Veterans (in thousands)
1	California	1,713
2	Texas	1,582
3	Florida	1,405
4	Pennsylvania	787
5	Ohio	764
6	New York	752
<b>7</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>707</b>
8	Virginia	699
9	Georgia	697
10	Michigan	577

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on 2018 average totals provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data was collected as part of the Current Population Survey.

**The costs of training or education programs required to obtain a license can prevent or delay a veteran’s entry into a given occupation.** Many veterans who have received military training in an occupation may only need a few additional hours or an additional course before being eligible for a license. Instead, they often are required to restart the process of obtaining licensure upon transitioning to the civilian workforce, incurring financial costs while taking time repeating training when they could otherwise be earning an income.

Though the Department of Defense spends billions training military members in hundreds of occupations that largely translate to civilian occupations, in many cases occupation-specific training completed as part of military service is not recognized in licensing regulations. In some instances, this lack of recognition may be legitimate because military training may not be equivalent to the training necessary for a civilian version of the same occupation. However, many military occupations do provide similar training that is partially or wholly equivalent to civilian occupational training. Ensuring clear and consistent recognition of applicable skills and experience can help smooth a veteran’s transition into the civilian labor force. Further, the written exams commonly required as part of licensing regulations may not account for the particular skillset of a veteran, who may have relevant on-the-job training but may lack the classroom education required to complete certain portions of exams.

**Congress established the military’s Transition Assistance Program as part of the National Defense Authorization Act in Fiscal Year 1990–91.**<sup>2</sup> The original purpose of the program was to help ease the transition to

<sup>2</sup> Public Law 101-510.

civilian life for military service members who were involuntarily separated as part of the force structure drawdowns of the late 1980s. Congressional interest in the program remained high from 1991 to 2011, particularly as it pertained to troops who served in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2011, the Veterans' Employment Initiative Task Force was established with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs; the task force subsequently redesigned the Transition Assistance Program.

### **Military Spouses**

**There are more than 630,000 active duty military spouses in the United States; about 86,000 active duty military spouses live in North Carolina.**

Due to military relocation, military spouses are 10 times more likely than other civilians to have moved to a new state in the last year.

According to a survey by Blue Star Families, 35% of military spouses work in a licensed occupation, 30% are unemployed, and 56% are underemployed. For those who work in licensed occupations, it can be time-consuming and costly to have a license recognized in a new state. Most military families move every two to three years, and some move even more frequently. In many cases, different states have different procedures and requirements for occupational licensing for the same occupation. According to a recent report from the Department of Defense, "These difficulties contribute to employment gaps and underemployment within military families, which can lead to additional stress and financial strain that could also impact military spouses' health and well-being, as well as service members' military readiness."

**The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act allows each service branch to reimburse spouses up to \$500 for re-licensure and re-certification costs resulting from relocations or moves that cross state lines.** Military spouses with careers that require a professional license or certification can therefore get help covering the costs of transferring those credentials when they undertake a permanent change-of-station move with their service member spouse. Spouses of both active duty and reserve component service members are eligible for this benefit as long as their husband or wife is serving on active duty.

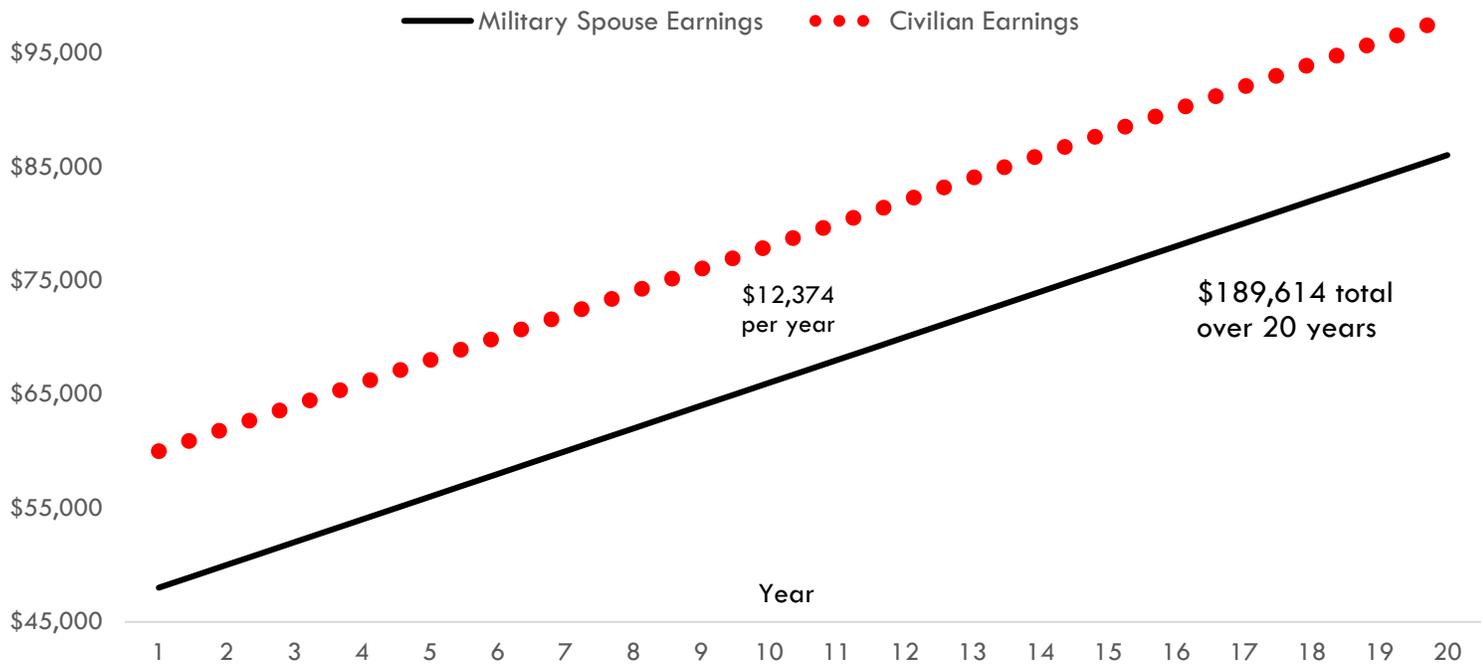
**In May 2018, the Council of Economic Advisers released a report on the employment challenges facing military spouses.** The report found that, compared to the civilian population,

- military spouses are less likely to be labor force participants;
- when employed, military spouses earn less than would otherwise be expected;
- military spouses face higher rates of unemployment;
- military spouses are disproportionately affected by occupational licensing requirements; and

- some policies to assist military spouses are already in place, beginning in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

**Military spouses face labor market disadvantages.** Frequent moves, unpredictable hours, rural base assignments, and deployments affect the labor market outcomes of military spouses. It is estimated that military spouses earn \$12,374 per year less than their civilian counterparts, resulting in losses of nearly \$190,000 over a 20-year military career.<sup>4</sup> This difference in earnings is shown in Exhibit 3.

**Exhibit 3: Military Spouses Earn Substantially Less Than Civilian Workers Over the Course of Their Spouses' Military Career**



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on data from the Council of Economic Advisers, May 2018.

**Session Law 2012-196 added N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 to state law, allowing for licensure by endorsement and temporary licensure for military-trained applicants and military spouses.** Exhibit 4 summarizes current licensure requirements in North Carolina for individuals with military training and for military spouses as outlined in the military licensure provisions.

<sup>3</sup> In 2011, Congress passed the VOW (Veterans Opportunity to Work) to Hire Heroes Act (Title II of Public Law 112-56), which made a pre-separation counseling program mandatory for all service members with at least 180 continuous days of active duty. Current law requires service members to begin participating in the Transition Assistance Program as soon as possible during the 24-month period preceding an anticipated retirement date or 12-month period preceding an anticipated separation date. It also specifies that pre-separation counseling should commence no later than 90 days before the date of discharge or release unless precluded by unanticipated circumstances or operational requirements.

<sup>4</sup> The net present value of lost income is \$189,614, averaging \$12,374 each year over a 20-year military career using a 3% discount rate.

## Exhibit 4: Licensure Requirements in North Carolina for Individuals with Military Training and for Military Spouses

An occupational licensing board (OLB) shall issue a license, certification, or registration to a military-trained applicant to allow the applicant to lawfully practice the applicant's occupation in North Carolina if, upon application to an occupational licensing board, the applicant satisfies the following conditions:

1. Has been awarded a military occupational specialty and has done all of the following at a level that is substantially equivalent to or exceeds the requirements for licensure in NC: completed a military program of training, completed testing or equivalent training and experience, and performed in the practice of the profession;
2. Has engaged in the active practice of the profession for at least two of the five years preceding the date of the application; and
3. Has not committed any act in any jurisdiction that would have constituted grounds for refusal, suspension, or revocation of a license to practice in NC at the time the act was committed and has no pending complaints.

**OR**

1. Presents official, notarized documentation, such as a United States Department of Defense Form 214 (DD-214), or similar substantiation, attesting to the applicant's military occupational specialty certification and experience; and
2. Passes a proficiency examination in lieu of satisfying the conditions set forth in law; however, if an applicant fails the proficiency examination, then the applicant may be required by the board to satisfy those conditions.

A military spouse who is seeking to become licensed in North Carolina shall meet the following criteria:

1. Holds a current license from another jurisdiction and that jurisdiction's requirements for licensure are substantially equivalent to or exceed the requirements for licensure in North Carolina;
2. Can demonstrate competency through methods as determined by the board, such as having completed continuing education units or having had recent experience for at least two of the five years preceding the date of the application under this section;
3. Has not committed any act in any jurisdiction that would have constituted grounds for refusal, suspension, or revocation of a license to practice in North Carolina at the time the act was committed; and
4. Is in good standing, has not been disciplined by the agency that had jurisdiction to issue the license, and has no pending complaints.

Other provisions:

- A board shall not charge a military-trained applicant or a military spouse an initial application fee for a license issued pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 93B-15.1. Nothing in N.C. Gen. Stat. 93B-15.1(k) shall be construed to prohibit a board from charging its ordinary fee for a renewal application or prohibit a third party from charging actual costs for a service such as a background check.
- All relevant experience of a military service member in the discharge of official duties or, for a military spouse, all relevant experience, including full-time and part-time experience, regardless of whether in a paid or volunteer capacity, shall be credited.
- A board shall issue a temporary practice permit to an applicant with licensure in another jurisdiction while the applicant is satisfying the requirements for licensure if the jurisdiction has standards that are substantially equivalent to the standards of an occupational licensing board in the State.
- A board may adopt rules necessary to implement this section.
- Residency is not required.

Exhibit 5 displays a timeline illustrating recent efforts by the General Assembly to further ease burdens in obtaining licensure for military-trained applicants and military spouses.

### Exhibit 5: Since 2012, North Carolina Has Worked to Make Licensure Easier for Military-Trained Applicants and Military Spouses

<b>2012</b>	Session Law 2012-196 adds N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1, allowing for licensure by endorsement and temporary licensure for military-trained applicants and military spouses.
<b>2014</b>	<p>The Legislative Research Commission conducts a study of Civilian Credit for Military Training and State Adjutant General Selection Criteria.</p> <p>Following the recommendations of the Legislative Research Commission study, Session Law 2014-67 modifies N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 by (1) giving occupational licensing boards no more than 30 days to notify military-trained applicants if their military experience does not satisfy requirements for licensure and (2) requiring boards to publish specific requirements for licensure and which requirements are met by military training or experience.</p>
<b>2015</b>	<p>The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is created, consolidating the former Veterans' Affairs Commission, the Governor's Jobs for Veterans Committee, the Division of Veterans Affairs, and the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission into one agency.</p> <p>Session Law 2015-143 modifies N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 to allow for licensure by proficiency examination for military-trained applicants.</p>
<b>2017</b>	Session Law 2017-28 requires occupational licensing boards to waive application fees for military-trained applicants or military spouses.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on review of general statute and session laws.

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## Findings

**Finding 1. Although North Carolina has implemented two out of three best practices for licensure of military spouses, occupational licensing boards are not currently required to implement an expedited application process.**

A 2012 report co-authored by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of Defense identified three best practice recommendations to facilitate licensure portability for military spouses.

- **Licensure by endorsement.** Whereas “licensure by examination” requires an applicant to go through state reviews as well as pass state or national exams and sometimes complete an apprenticeship, licensure by endorsement is a more streamlined process. If a military spouse holds a license from another state, he or she is generally eligible for licensure by endorsement if the requirements in the previous state are similar to those in the new state and if he or she does not have a disciplinary record.
- **Temporary or provisional licensing.** A temporary or provisional license is typically valid for 3 to 12 months and allows a military spouse to work during that time while fulfilling requirements (such as taking examinations) to obtain a permanent license. To obtain a temporary license, a military spouse usually must provide proof of a current license, submit to a background check, and submit an application and fee.
- **Expedited application process.** An expedited application process prioritizes applications from military spouses, allowing them to return to work faster. The Department of Defense recommends allowing occupational licensing boards the authority to approve a license based on an affidavit from the applicant that the information provided in the application is true and that verifying documentation has been requested.

**North Carolina has implemented licensure by endorsement and temporary or provisional licensing but has not implemented an expedited application process for military spouses.** As shown in Exhibit 6, North Carolina is one of nine states that has implemented licensure by endorsement and temporary or provisional licensing but does not offer an expedited application process.

**Exhibit 6**

North Carolina is One of Nine States with Licensure by Endorsement and Temporary or Provisional Licensure but No Expedited Application Process for Military Spouses

	<b>Expedited Application Process</b>	<b>No Expedited Application Process</b>
<b>Licensure by Endorsement and Temporary Licensure</b>	AL, AR, CA, CO, GA, HI, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MA, MT, ND, OK, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VA, WA (24)	DE, FL, MS, NJ, <b>NC</b> , OH, OR, WI, WY (9)
<b>Licensure by Endorsement, no Temporary Licensure</b>	NM (1)	AZ, CT, NV, NH, UT (5)
<b>Temporary Licensure, no Licensure by Endorsement</b>	AK, IL, MD, MN, NY, WV (6)	MI, MO, NE (3)
<b>Neither</b>	(0)	IA, PA (2)

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on Lynne M. Borden, et al. (2017). Military Spouse Licensure Portability Examination.

Temporary licensure already allows military spouses the opportunity to work while applying for a permanent license. However, spouses still must wait for these temporary licenses to be processed. They must also account for the time necessary to collect transcripts, test scores, certified copies of licenses from previous states, and other required documents, tasks that are often being performed while addressing more pressing concerns like finding housing and enrolling children in new schools. Adopting the best practice of implementing an expedited application process would enable military spouses to begin working in the licensed occupation immediately.

**Other states have implemented an expedited application process.**

Montana allows applicants to submit an affidavit along with an application attesting to its accuracy and certifying that required documents are forthcoming. Utah has taken a different approach, allowing military spouses to use current out-of-state licenses. Virginia and Kentucky require boards to issue a license by endorsement or a temporary license within a set timeframe from receipt of the completed application. Military families benefit from this approach because it limits the amount of time it takes to get a license, and therefore limits the amount of time the family will have to forgo a second income.

Further, requiring boards to issue licenses to military spouse applicants within 30 days would align the requirements for military spouses with those already in place for military-trained applicants. Boards in North Carolina are required to notify a military-trained applicant within 30 days of the receipt of an application if the applicant’s training or experience does not satisfy the requirements for licensure.

Military spouses cannot work while waiting for a temporary license to be processed. Requiring an expedited application process would allow military spouses to begin earning an income sooner, thereby easing the financial strain imposed upon military families by frequent relocation.

**Finding 2. There is no requirement for occupational licensing boards to make veterans and military spouses aware of the opportunities offered by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1, which among other provisions directs the waiver of initial application fees for licensure for military-trained applicants and military spouses.**

In 2014, the North Carolina General Assembly conducted a Legislative Research Commission study that evaluated several issues affecting military service members and military spouses, including how the lack of information being disseminated by boards following the implementation of military licensure provisions affected the number of applicants from these groups.<sup>5</sup>

**Use of the provisions by military applicants and military spouses has gradually increased since the law's passage.** To gauge current usage of the military licensure provisions, the Program Evaluation Division conducted a survey of 54 occupational licensing boards as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-1 and used the same criteria as the Division's 2014 report, *Occupational Licensing Agencies Should Not be Centralized, but Stronger Oversight is Needed*.<sup>6,7</sup> The Program Evaluation Division did not receive responses from the Acupuncture Licensing Board, the Board of Podiatry Examiners, and the Cape Fear River Navigation and Pilotage Commission.

Although one respondent did criticize the statutory provisions as representing a "one size fits all" approach, the Program Evaluation Division generally found no issues with interpretation of the law. PED also determined that there has been growth in the use of the military licensure provisions by occupational licensing boards since the survey that accompanied the 2014 Legislative Research Commission study, though usage still remains low. In 2014, only 3 of 63 boards (5%) reported military-trained applicants or military spouse applicants using the provisions. Five years later, the Program Evaluation Division survey found 20 out of 51 boards (39%) reported military-trained applicants or military spouses seeking to use the military licensure provisions in applying for licensure. Exhibit 7 illustrates this increase in usage at the board level and individual applicant level for both military-trained applicants and military spouses.

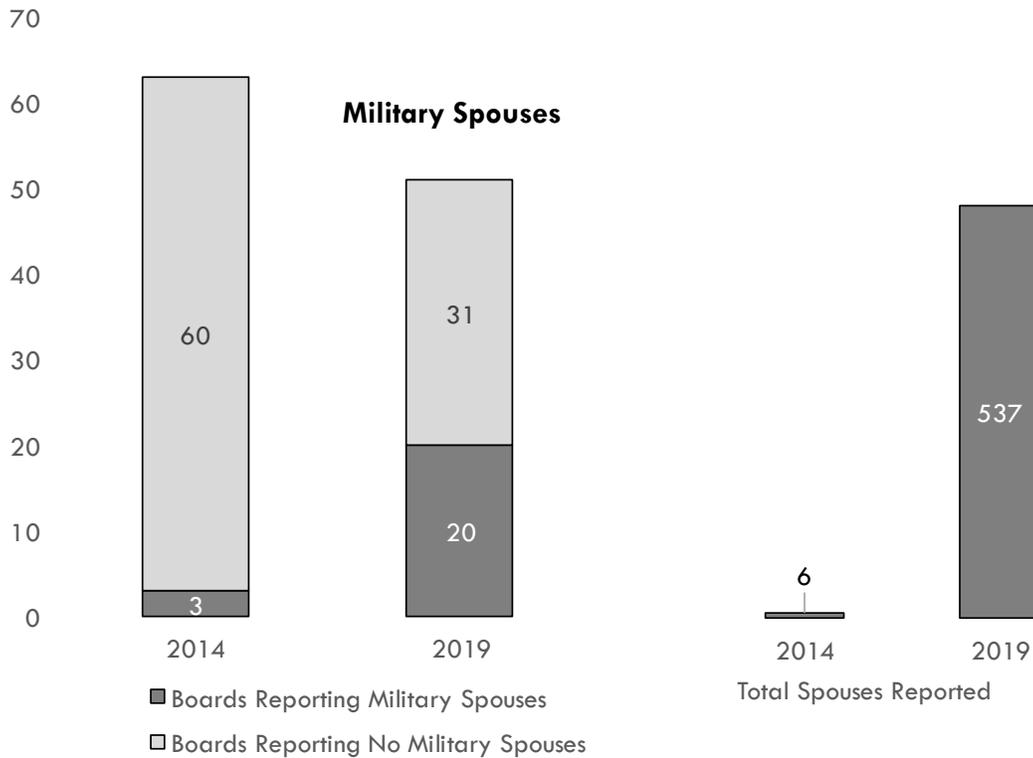
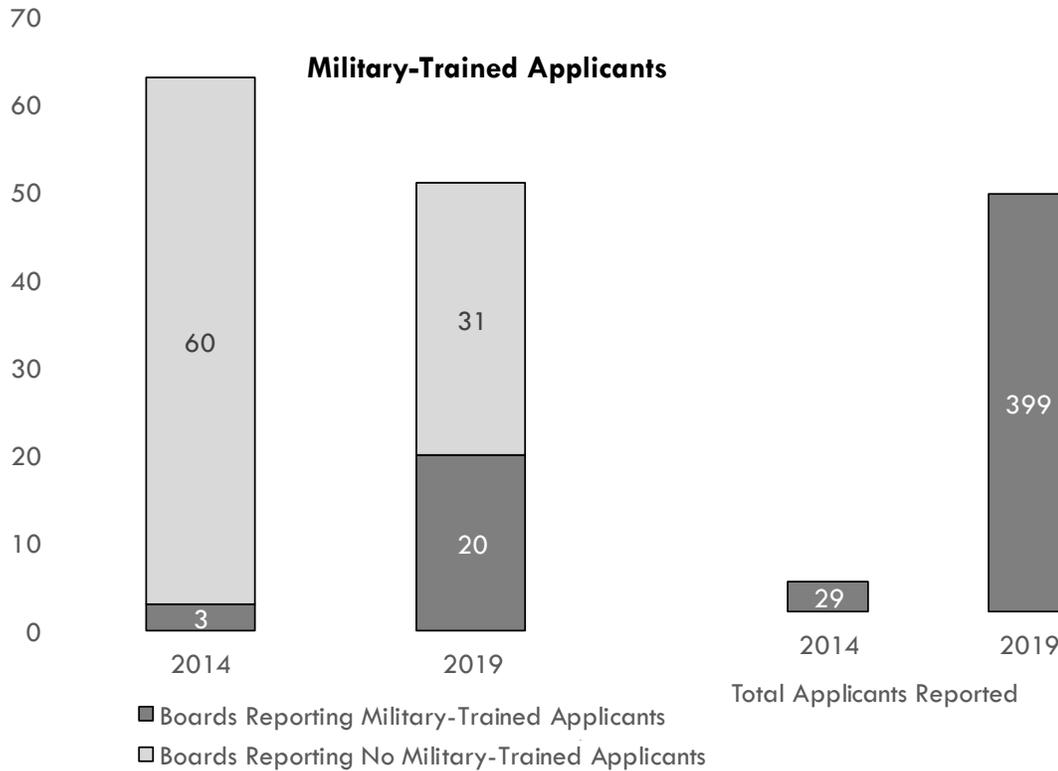
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<sup>5</sup> The North Carolina General Assembly authorized a study in 2014 on *Civilian Credit for Military Training and State Adjutant General Selection Criteria* in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 120-30.17(1).

<sup>6</sup> In its [2014 report](#), the Program Evaluation Division recommended the General Assembly establish an Occupational Licensing Commission to improve the effectiveness of occupational licensing boards and assist with resolving disputes between boards.

<sup>7</sup> The Program Evaluation Division surveyed the 55 occupational licensing boards queried in the 2014 PED report with the following exclusions and inclusions: N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1(e) excludes the State Bar; N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1(j) excludes the Medical Board; and, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1(i) includes the State Board of Education when issuing teacher licenses.

**Exhibit 7: Board Usage of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 Has Increased During the Past Five Years**



Note: The State Board of Education issues teacher licenses to military-trained applicants and to military spouse applicants but does not currently collect data on the number of teacher licenses issued for these categories.

Source: Program Evaluation Division and 2014 Legislative Research Commission study on Civilian Credit for Military Training and State Adjutant General Selection Criteria.

The survey results demonstrate there has been an increase in the number of boards that have taken advantage of the military licensure provisions and provided information for military-trained applicants and military spouses to apply for licensure. As a result, the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who have taken advantage of applying for licensure under the statute has increased. Appendices B and C provide detailed breakdowns on the total number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who have sought to use the military licensure provisions in applying for licensure since July 2013.

Exhibit 8 shows the five occupational licensing boards in North Carolina for which applicants have most frequently used the military licensure provisions since July 2013.

**Exhibit 8**

State Board of Dental Examiners Reported Most Frequent Usage of Licensure Provisions by Military-Trained Applicants Since July 2013

Occupational Licensing Board	Number of Military-Trained Applicants
State Board of Dental Examiners	209
Social Work Certification and Licensure Board	73
Board of Pharmacy	37
Board of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors	24
Psychology Board	10

*Source: Program Evaluation Division based on survey of occupational licensing boards.*

Exhibit 9 shows the five occupational licensing boards in North Carolina for which the provisions have been used most frequently by military spouse applicants since July 2013.

## Exhibit 9

Board of Nursing Reported Most Frequent Usage of Licensure Provisions by Military Spouse Applicants Since July 2013

Occupational Licensing Board	Number of Military Spouse Applicants
Board of Nursing	104
Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists	102
Board of Pharmacy	95
Social Work Certification and Licensure Board	67
State Board of Dental Examiners	64

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on survey of occupational licensing boards.

**Although the majority of boards reference military licensure provisions on their websites, there is currently no requirement for them to do so.** The United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) has found that boards across many states are not accessible, do not provide information on military spouse licensure on their websites, and fail to make staff sufficiently aware of legislation pertaining to licensing procedures for military-trained applicants or military spouses. However, North Carolina occupational licensing boards are governed by no federal or state requirement to make this information accessible on their websites or inform applicants of statutory provisions related to military licensure.

Nonetheless, the majority of the State’s boards do disseminate some language that directs applicants to the military licensure provisions to ensure recognition of military training and experience. The Program Evaluation Division found links or references to this statute on 29 board websites out of the 54 occupational licensing boards examined.<sup>8</sup> In other words, although it is not required, most boards are providing some information to help military-trained applicants, veterans, and military spouses determine if the experience they have acquired meets the criteria to obtain licensure.

However, a requirement that all boards reference the provisions would better equip advocacy programs to disseminate material about potential job positions, required skills, and other essential information. In interviews with the Program Evaluation Division, representatives from some North Carolina military advocacy groups indicated a lack of familiarity with the military licensure provisions.<sup>9</sup> In many cases these groups stated they were not sharing information about the legislation with members of the military community because they were not aware of it. Therefore, the absence of a

<sup>8</sup> All 54 occupational licensing boards included in the Program Evaluation Division study had a website except for the Morehead City Navigation and Pilotage Commission.

<sup>9</sup> The five military advocacy groups interviewed by the Program Evaluation Division were NC4ME, NC National Guard, NC Works, Hiring Our Heroes, and the American Legion.

requirement for boards to provide information on the military licensure provisions is leaving many advocacy groups, military service members, and military spouses unaware of the potential advantages associated with the legislation.

**Although several boards disseminate information intended to assist military-trained applicants and military spouses, the level of information provided varies widely.** States that have enacted legislation aiding military-trained applicants and military spouses can further work to streamline and improve current policies and procedures used by occupational licensing boards in sharing as much beneficial information as possible with these groups. The Program Evaluation Division found that most of the 29 boards that provide information on military licensure provisions to their applicants only reference the statute. However, some boards provide valuable additional information for military-trained applicants and military spouses to use in determining whether they meet the criteria to obtain a license, registration, or certification.

For example, the North Carolina Board of Nursing references the provisions on its website and also supplements the statute by providing a wealth of additional information for military-trained applicants and military spouses, including military occupational specialty codes for specialty training. Compared to several boards that simply reproduce the statutory language on their websites and offer nothing more, the Board of Nursing stands as a model example for other boards to follow in providing highly detailed and easily accessible information on military-related criteria.

In summary, by providing additional licensure information and easier access to materials, occupational licensing boards as a whole have triggered an increase in the use of the military licensure provisions by military-trained applicants and military spouses. However, to ensure that military families are receiving the full benefit of the provisions, all boards will need to adequately provide access to licensure information for military spouses and military-trained applicants during the application process.

**Finding 3. Stakeholders in the military community feel the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 are important and should be tracked.**

**Currently, boards are not required to report on the number of persons, either military-trained applicants or military spouses, who apply for licensure using military licensure provisions.** Boards are required to report annually on 15 other items to the Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee. These items include the number of persons issued initial licenses, the number who applied for licensure by reciprocity or comity, and the number who were granted licenses by reciprocity and comity. To track utilization of statute intended to ease transition and relocation for military families, boards should report the number of applicants seeking licensure pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1, the number who are denied licensure under this statute, and a summary of reasons for denials.

Absent such a requirement, boards may not track how many of their applicants seek licensure pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1. For example, the State Board of Education reported issuing licenses to military-trained applicants and military spouses but did not know precisely how many applicants used the statute because the Board was not collecting this data. Data collection and measurement are sound management practices. By tracking the number of applicants seeking licensure pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1, the boards and the General Assembly can determine the extent to which the statute is being utilized. Further, the General Assembly can judge the effectiveness of the statute by examining the reasons for denials.

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## Recommendations

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### **Recommendation 1. The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to offer an expedited application process for licensing military spouses.**

As discussed in Finding 1, North Carolina has implemented both licensure by endorsement and temporary or provisional licensure, two of the three best practices recommended by the Department of Defense for facilitating licensure portability for military spouses. However, North Carolina has not implemented the third best practice, an expedited application process for spouses.

The General Assembly should direct occupational licensing boards to implement an expedited application process to license military spouses by December 1, 2020.

### **Recommendation 2. The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to publicize and promote N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in order to increase awareness of its provisions by military-trained applicants and military spouses.**

As demonstrated in Finding 2, there is no requirement for occupational licensing boards to make veterans and military spouses aware of opportunities provided by the military licensure provisions. In interviews with the Program Evaluation Division, several military advocacy groups reported not being aware of the provisions. The Program Evaluation Division found links or references to the statute on 29 board websites out of the 54 occupational licensing boards examined in this study.

The General Assembly should direct occupational licensing boards to promote awareness of military licensure provisions to military-trained applicants and military spouses by December 1, 2020.

At a minimum, each applicable occupational licensing board should be required to publish N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 provisions on its website in an easily accessible location.

**Recommendation 3. The General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to annually report (i) the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who were licensed pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 and (ii) the number who were denied licensure.**

As shown in Finding 3, stakeholders in the military community feel the military licensure provisions are important and should be tracked. Each group interviewed by the Program Evaluation Division indicated it was in favor of establishing a reporting requirement to track the number of military-trained applicants as well as military spouse applicants.

The General Assembly should direct occupational licensing boards to collect data necessary to report the required information. These reporting requirements should be added to already existing reporting requirements specified in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-2. The data should include a summary of the reasons military-trained applicants and military spouses were denied licensure but should not disclose any identifying information about any applicant.

The first report with Fiscal Year 2019–20 data should be submitted to the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee by October 31, 2021.

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## Appendices

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Appendix A. Program Evaluation Division Survey Results

Appendix B. Number of Military-Trained Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013

Appendix C. Number of Military Spouse Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013

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## Agency Response

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A draft of this report was submitted to the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to review. Its response is provided following the appendices.

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## Program Evaluation Division Contact and Acknowledgments

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For more information on this report, please contact the lead evaluator, Jim Horne, at [jim.horne@ncleg.gov](mailto:jim.horne@ncleg.gov).

Staff members who made key contributions to this report include Jenny Hausman and Sidney Thomas. John W. Turcotte is the director of the Program Evaluation Division.

## Appendix A: Program Evaluation Division Survey Results

In order to gauge opinions on the six subtopics detailed in the legislation directing this study, the Program Evaluation Division used a survey tool sent to occupational licensing boards. Responses provided by occupational licensing boards are summarized under each subtopic.

### (1) **Whether the criteria in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 should be expanded to allow for the licensure of more military-trained applicants and military spouses.**

Summary of survey responses: Occupational licensing boards provided numerous suggestions for improving N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 criteria including:

- *Promote increased applicant awareness.*
- *Boards should establish rules and place military-related application notices on their websites.*
- *It would be helpful to have the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs work with the State's occupational licensing boards to establish what trainings or job functions would meet the requirements for licensing. Making military personnel and veterans aware in advance of leaving the service would alleviate confusion for the licensing boards and military personnel/veterans.*
- *Publish links to the statute and guidance on respective board's websites.*

The Program Evaluation Division also asked occupational licensing boards the following three questions regarding existing provisions in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1:

- **Should military-trained applicants be required to have a military occupational specialty, to have completed a military program of training, to have completed testing or have equivalent training and experience, and to have performed in the occupational specialty to be eligible for licensure under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1?**

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **37 (73%)** were in favor of keeping this provision as is without any changes.

- **Should military-trained applicants be required to have engaged in the active practice of the occupation for which the person is seeking licensure or certification for at least two of the last five years to be eligible under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1?**

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **32 (63%)** were in favor of keeping this provision as is without any changes.<sup>10</sup>

- **Should military-trained applicants be eligible for licensure under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 only if they have not committed any act in any jurisdiction that would have constituted grounds for refusal, suspension, or revocation of their license in this State at the time the act was committed, and if they have no pending complaints?**

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **41 (80%)** were in favor of keeping this provision as is without any changes.

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<sup>10</sup> Some boards did state that six months to a maximum of one year would be sufficient experience depending on the occupation.

**(2) The effectiveness of publishing information on the criteria for licensure of military spouses, as required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1, and whether there are additional platforms on which this information should be published to ensure broader dissemination to military spouses.**

Summary of survey responses: **25 (49%)** of 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey were in favor of publishing information on the criteria of military spouses.

Some occupational licensing boards made suggestions for additional platforms for publishing information on military-trained applicants.

- *The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) could publish this information on their website.*
- *Military relocation assistance could refer members to the occupational licensing boards.*
- *In addition to the website, publishing these requirements periodically [once per quarter] in our board newsletter which will potentially inform all licensees. Their awareness of the law will help military applicants know their rights under the law.*
- *Email all occupational licensing boards.*

**(3) The feasibility and effectiveness of including a question about military status, including status as a military spouse, on applications for licensure.**

Summary of survey responses: **20 (39%)** of 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey were in favor of including military status on applications and **22 (43%)** of 51 boards were in favor of including status as a military spouse on applications.

**(4) Determining what steps can be taken to provide or enhance continuing education programs to assist military spouses in maintaining an active occupational license, even if issued by another state.**

Summary of survey responses: **37 (73%)** of 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey stated that they did not offer any continuing education programs. However, several boards did offer suggestions for enhancing continuing education programs including

- *Would be helpful to coordinate with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to develop such training.*
- *There are thousands of online sites that offer continuing education.*
- *All continuing education can be taken online which appears to be the most convenient for military or military spouses who cannot take an in-class offering.*

**(5) Providing training for at least one employee in the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on the licensure process outlined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 for military-trained applicants and military spouses and considering ways in which to disseminate information about this employee's availability to applicants.**

Summary of survey responses: **21 (41%)** of 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey stated they were in favor of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs designating at least one employee and training that person on the licensure process outlined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 for military-trained applicants and military spouse applicants, and considering ways in which to disseminate information about this employee's availability to applicants. This position would offer a single point of contact, which is a recommended best practice.

Several boards provided comments for and against this potential designation including

- *We believe that a dedicated position within the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs would be a central portal for applicants with questions. Presumably, candidates would then receive consistent, reliable and accurate information from a single source which would supplement the information we provide. We would publicize this resource through our newsletter and on our applications for licensure.*
- *Having a resource in Veterans Affairs that could evaluate the veteran's service record and advise on what state licenses could be procured from the veteran's service would facilitate a smoother transition from military to public/private service.*
- *Occupational Coordinator - Should be knowledgeable of the requirements of the various professions and whether or not equivalency can be considered for education/experience gained through military service.*
- *All occupations, of course, have different licensure processes/criteria. Better for staff at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to direct applicants to the right licensing body.*
- *I believe it would be a useful resource, one that would make it a "no wrong door" approach for potential licensees. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs could also provide feedback based on a more global perspective for all Occupational Licensing Agencies -- for example, the agency could identify common issues that many applicants experience for different license types.*
- *This would be a legislative issue for determination, not a Board determination.*
- *There are 55+ different processes. Perhaps they should be trained on licensure in general*
- *I think it would be difficult for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to train an employee to understand all of the nuances and criteria especially related to both trade and professional licensing Boards in North Carolina alone. Our Board staff is well versed on the law, is available Monday through Friday and goes out of its way to help any candidate interested in being licensed through N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1. Additionally, I am a military retired veteran myself and understand the law and candidate needs.*

- (6) Whether to develop a process for annually gathering data from all occupational licensing boards on the number of military-trained applicants and military spouses who (i) were licensed pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 or under the existing licensure, certification, or registration requirements established by occupational licensing boards and (ii) were denied licensure.**

Summary of survey results:

#### **Military-Trained Applicants**

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **9 (18%)** were in favor of requiring occupational licensing boards to report annually on the number of **military-trained applicants who were licensed** under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1.

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **10 (20%)** were in favor of requiring occupational licensing boards to report annually on the number of **military-trained applicants who were denied licensure** and the reasons for the denials.

#### **Military Spouses**

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **7 (14%)** were in favor of requiring occupational licensing boards to report annually on the number of **military spouses who were licensed** under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1.

Of the 51 occupational licensing boards that responded to the PED survey, **8 (16%)** were in favor of requiring occupational licensing boards to report annually on the number of **military spouses who were denied licensure** and the reasons for denials.

*Source: Program Evaluation Division based on data provided by occupational licensing boards in survey responses.*

## Appendix B: Number of Military-Trained Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013

Rank	Name of Occupational Licensing Board	Number of Military-Trained Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013
1	State Board of Dental Examiners	209
2	Social Work Certification and Licensure Board	73
3	Board of Pharmacy (See note below.)	37
4	Board of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors	24
5	Psychology Board	10
6	Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy	8
7	Board of Environmental Health Specialist Examiners	8
8	State Board of Examiners in Optometry	5
9	Board of Occupational Therapy	5
10	State Board of Refrigeration Examiners	4
11	Board of Physical Therapy Examiners	3
12	Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists	3
13	Respiratory Care Board	2
14	Board of Dietetics / Nutrition	2
15	State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors	2
16	State Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Board	1
17	Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure Board	1
18	Board of Barber Examiners	1
19	Board of Opticians	1
20	State Board of Education (See note below.)	0
Total Military-Trained Applicants Since July 2013		399

Notes: The 37 applicants to the Board of Pharmacy consisted of 6 pharmacists and 31 pharmacy technicians. The State Board of Education does issue teacher licenses to military-trained applicants and to military spouses but it does not currently collect data on the number of teacher licenses issued for these two categories. The following 31 occupational licensing boards responded to the PED survey but reported zero military-trained applicants who sought to utilize N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1: Appraisal Board, Auctioneer Licensing Board, Board for Licensing of Geologists, Board for Licensing of Soil Scientists, Board of Architecture, Board of Athletic Trainers Examiners, Board of Chiropractic Examiners, Board of Cosmetic Art Examiners, Board of Electrolysis Examiners, Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators, Board of Examiners of Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors, Board of Funeral Service, Board of Landscape Architects, Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Board of Nursing, Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure, Board of Registration for Foresters, Cemetery Commission, Interpreter and Transliterator Licensing Board, Irrigation Contractor's Licensing Board, Landscape Contractors' Licensing Board, Licensing Board for General Contractors, Locksmith Licensing Board, Midwifery Joint Committee, Morehead City Navigation and Pilotage Commission, Onsite Wastewater Contractor Inspector Certification Board, Real Estate Commission, State Board of CPA Examiners, Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board, Veterinary Medical Board

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on data provided by occupational licensing boards in survey responses.

### Appendix C: Number of Military Spouse Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013

Rank	Name of Occupational Licensing Board	Number of Military Spouse Applicants Who Sought to Use N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1 in Applying for Licensure Since July 2013
1	Board of Nursing	104
2	Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists	102
3	Board of Pharmacy (See note below.)	95
4	Social Work Certification and Licensure Board	67
5	State Board of Dental Examiners	64
6	Board of Physical Therapy Examiners	56
7	Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy	10
8	Board of Occupational Therapy	9
9	Board of Dietetics / Nutrition	8
10	Respiratory Care Board	5
11	Board of Cosmetic Art Examiners	3
12	Psychology Board	3
13	Board of Barber Examiners	2
14	Board of Opticians	2
15	State Board of Examiners in Optometry	2
16	Board of Environmental Health Specialist Examiners	2
17	State Board of CPA Examiners	1
18	Real Estate Commission	1
19	Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure Board	1
20	State Board of Education (See note below.)	0
Total Military Spouse Applicants Since July 2013		537

Notes: The 95 applicants to the Board of Pharmacy consisted of 15 pharmacists and 80 pharmacy technicians. The State Board of Education does issue teacher licenses to military-trained applicants and to military spouses but it does not currently collect data on the number of teacher licenses issued for these two categories. The following 31 occupational licensing boards responded to the PED survey but reported zero military spouses who sought to utilize N.C. Gen. Stat. § 93B-15.1: Appraisal Board, Auctioneer Licensing Board, Board for Licensing of Geologists, Board for Licensing of Soil Scientists, Board of Architecture, Board of Athletic Trainers Examiners, Board of Chiropractic Examiners, Board of Electrolysis Examiners, Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators, Board of Examiners of Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors, Board of Funeral Service, Board of Landscape Architects, Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Board of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors, Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure, Board of Registration for Foresters, Cemetery Commission, Interpreter and Transliterator Licensing Board, Irrigation Contractor's Licensing Board, Landscape Contractors' Licensing Board, Licensing Board for General Contractors, Locksmith Licensing Board, Midwifery Joint Committee, Morehead City Navigation and Pilotage Commission, Onsite Wastewater Contractor Inspector Certification Board, State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors, State Board of Refrigeration Examiners, State Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Board, Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board, and Veterinary Medical Board

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on data provided by occupational licensing boards in survey responses.



## NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Roy Cooper  
GOVERNOR

Larry D. Hall  
SECRETARY

**January 3, 2020**

Mr. John W. Turcotte, Director  
Program Evaluation Division  
300 N. Salisbury Street, Suite 100  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603-5925

Dear Mr. Turcotte:

The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has reviewed the Program Evaluation Divisions' (PED) preliminary draft report on military licensure practices in North Carolina. NC DMVA has determined that the report is generally accurate and in line with the observations of the Department. It is clear from the report that the PED evaluation team worked hard to ensure that this report was comprehensive, including a variety of perspectives and potential avenues for action. Regarding PED's recommendations to ease burdens on military-trained applicants and military spouses in obtaining occupational licensure, the Department provides the following comments:

- Recommendation 1. The NC DMVA agrees with the recommendation that the General Assembly should direct occupational licensing boards to adopt a specific, existing expedited licensing process for military spouses as practiced in other states. Appropriate legislative committees could conceivably aid in this process. In so doing, the occupational licensing boards and the General Assembly can ensure shared goals and measurable outcomes to improve the licensure process and retain our status as the nation's most military and veteran family friendly state.
- Recommendation 2. The NC DMVA agrees with the recommendation that the General Assembly should require occupational licensing boards to publicize and promote N.C. General Statute 93B-15.1 in order to increase awareness by military trained applicants and military spouse of these statutory provisions. The General Assembly could also consider if additional resources are needed by the occupational licensing boards and relevant corresponding agencies in order to aid in an awareness campaign regarding current and future efforts to streamline and improve the military-trained applicants and military spouse application process.

The NC DMVA again commends the PED for undertaking this effort to remove any unnecessary burdens for military-trained applicants and military spouses. We look forward to working with and supporting the efforts and implementation of the most veteran and military spouse friendly

employment laws and policies in NC. My office stands by, ready to assist you with further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry D. Hall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue highlight behind the text.

Larry D. Hall, Secretary  
N.C. Department of Military and Veterans