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Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

TO: Representative Helen Head, Chair

**CC: House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs
Representative Bill Canfield
Representative Maxine Grad**

**FROM: Jaye Johnson, Governor's Counsel
Kendal Smith, Dir. of Policy Dev. & Legislative Affairs, Governor's Office
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SUBJECT: Veterans Licensing Reciprocity – H.744

DATE: February 1, 2018

Thank you for inviting us to testify before your Committee earlier this month regarding expanding licensing reciprocity for veterans of our armed services.

Governor Scott believes that expanding the State's recognition of the skills and training service members receive while in uniform helps to honor their service, assists their transition to the civilian workforce upon their retirement from the military, and could help attract more people to stay in - and move to - Vermont at a time in which we need to grow our labor force. Military retirees often go on to second careers while adding to the economy of the State by bringing life-long incomes, healthcare, and various types of veteran benefits such as the GI bill, small business loans and VA home eligibility, which add to the tax base.

As you will recall, during our testimony we discussed three jobs within the military that we, in conjunction with the Office of Professional Regulation and others, feel can be codified in statute to provide a direct path to professional licensure in Vermont. They are, as seen in H.744, 91B Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic for a Vermont Certified Inspection Mechanic; 92G Culinary Specialist for a Vermont food establishment license, and; a 68W Healthcare Specialist as a licensed nursing assistant. Regarding the 68W Healthcare Specialist, in order to ensure a direct path to licensure, we believe that the language should be amended to say:

- (b) The Board may shall issue a license to practice as a nursing assistant to an applicant who:
- (1) is a service member or a veteran;
 - (2) has received designation by the U.S. Armed Forces as a 68W Healthcare Specialist;
- and
- (3) is certified as a National Registry Emergency Medical Technician.

In addition to these three licenses, during our testimony members of the Committee expressed interest in expanding the number of direct licensures to other professions. We appreciate the opportunity to take the time needed to have additional discussions with the Vermont National Guard, the Division of Fire Safety, the Office of Professional Regulation and others, and now would like to propose several additional reciprocity measures for the Committee to consider.

The first two relate to licensing within the Division of Fire Safety. In the U.S. Armed Forces a 12R Electrician and a 12N Plumber receive the training required for journeyman's licensure in Vermont, so long as they complete 8,000 hours or four years of active duty field work.

Further, in addition the language already in the bill regarding nursing assistants, we propose and OPR has confirmed, that a 66H Nurse designation by the U.S. Armed Services directly correlates with a civilian registered nurse (RN) license. For these additions to H. 744, proposed language is attached.

We will continue to collaborate with the National Guard, Governor's Veterans Advisory Council, OPR and others on if there are further opportunities, but believe these additions, as well as what is currently in H.744, serve as appropriate starting points. In consultation with the Guard, we have identified these occupations as areas in which service members in our region that are detaching from the military have a background.

Additionally, the Agency of Education is exploring areas to identify the best use of financial dollars to support a Troops To Teachers (TTT) program in Vermont. A grant opportunity through the Department of Defense provides funding to state education agencies with the following goals identified for funding:

- Attract and increase the number of eligible current and former members of the armed forces participating in the TTT Program;
- Implement educational models to award academic credit for prior career experience and/or other relevant military training;
- Reduce barriers that prevent veterans from meeting teacher certifications requirements for transitioning into teaching careers;
- Provide individualized counseling to assist TTT participants with meeting the educational and certification requirements to transition into a teaching career;
- Support state and local education agencies with hiring motivated, experienced and dedicated eligible members and former members of the armed forces; thereby, increasing the number of veterans employed as teachers;
- Address geographic areas with critical teacher shortages, especially in high-need schools.

We look forward our continued conversation with your Committee on these matters and welcome the opportunity to come back to discuss the details in this memo.

PROPOSED ADDENDUM TO H. 744 FOR PURPOSES OF ADDING A PATH TO DIRECT LICENSURE FOR VETERANS QUALIFIED FOR EMPLOYMENT AS JOURNEYMAN PLUMBER, JOURNEYMAN ELECTRICIAN AND REGISTERED NURSE

26 VSA § 906. Examinations not required

- (a) Licenses shall be issued without examination on payment of the required fee.
- (b) A master's or journeyman's license, as the case may be, shall be issued to a person to whom a master electrician's license or a journeyman electrician's license has been previously issued by another state, whose standards are equivalent to those of this state, if under the laws or regulations of the state issuing the license a similar privilege is granted to electricians licensed under the laws of this state.
- (c) A journeyman's license shall be issued to a to a service member or veteran if the applicant provides the Electrician's Licensing Board with a complete application and documentation that the applicant has received a designation by the U.S. Armed Forces as a 12R Electrician and has completed a minimum of 8,000 hours, or four years of active duty field work.
- (d) For purposes of this section, "service member" means an individual who is an active duty member of (a) the U.S. Armed Forces; (b) a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces; (c) the U.S. Coast Guard; or (d) the national guard of any state. "Veteran" means a former service member who received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions from active duty within two years before the date on which the veteran submitted an application for licensure. "Veteran" does not include an individual who has completed active duty and has been discharged for more than two years before the veteran submitted an application for licensure.

26 VSA § 907. Recognition of experience in or out of state; service members and veterans

- (a) The board, in determining the qualifications of an applicant for a license, may in its discretion give recognition, in the case of an application for a master's license, to the applicant's experience as a licensed journeyman in another state, or in the case of an application for a journeyman's license, to an apprenticeship served in another state, or may otherwise give recognition to experience or prior qualifications.
- (b) The board, in determining the qualifications of an applicant for a license, shall give recognition, in the case of an application for a master's license, to the applicant's

experience as a 12R Electrician and shall otherwise give recognition to experience or prior qualifications.

26 VSA § 2194. Examinations not required; temporary licenses

- (a) Appropriate licenses without examination may be issued upon the payment of the required fee to a person to whom a master plumber's license or a journeyman plumber's license or a specialty license or equivalent has been previously issued by another state or municipality, provided that state or municipality maintained a standard of requirements equivalent to those of this state and who presents satisfactory proof to the board that the applicant is a bona fide licensee. An applicant under this subsection shall be exempt from examination only if the applicant holds a license from a foreign state or municipality and if under the laws or regulations of the foreign state or municipality issuing the license a like exemption or reciprocal agreement, or both, is granted to licensees under the laws of this state.
- (b) A Journeyman's license without examination shall be issued upon the payment of the required fee to a person to a to a service member or veteran if the applicant provides the Plumber's Examining Board with a complete application and documentation that the applicant has received a designation by the U.S. Armed Forces as a 12N Plumber and has completed a minimum of 8,000 hours, or four years of active duty field work.
- (c) For purposes of this section, "service member" means an individual who is an active duty member of (a) the U.S. Armed Forces; (b) a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces; (c) the U.S. Coast Guard; or (d) the national guard of any state. "Veteran" means a former service member who received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions from active duty within two years before the date on which the veteran submitted an application for licensure. "Veteran" does not include an individual who has completed active duty and has been discharged for more than two years before the veteran submitted an application for licensure.

26 V.S.A. § 1621. Registered nurse licensure by examination

- (a) To be eligible for licensure as a registered nurse by examination, an applicant shall complete:

(1) an approved U.S. registered nursing education program meeting requirements set by the Board by rule; and

(2) examinations as determined by the Board.

(b) The Board shall issue a license to practice as a registered nurse to an applicant who:

(1) is a service member or a veteran;

(2) has received designation by the U.S. Armed Forces as a 66H Nurse; and

(3) has received a bachelor's degree in nursing from a program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or accepted by the U.S. Secretary of Education, and has completed a qualified course in public health nursing or one year of supervised experience.

(c) As used in this section:

(1) "Service member" means an individual who is an active duty member of:

(A) the U.S. Armed Forces;

(B) a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces;

(C) the U.S. Coast Guard; or

(D) the National Guard of any state.

(2) "Veteran" means a former service member who received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions from active duty not more than two years prior to submitting an application for licensure.