

Massachusetts Gov. Baker's administration files legislation to further support military families transferring to Massachusetts

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration filed legislation to improve the occupational licensing process for certain professions for military families transferring to Massachusetts. The legislation would help facilitate license portability for military families transferring to military installations in Massachusetts by entering the Commonwealth into a series of interstate licensure compacts and other agreements.

"This legislation will help the Commonwealth further improve and streamline the process for military families who are looking to transfer their professional licenses to Massachusetts," said Governor Charlie Baker. "Our administration is committed to helping these military families successfully resettle in the Commonwealth, and these steps will ensure that military families who are making Massachusetts their new home will have an easier time in keeping their professional licenses and maintaining that source of income."

"Massachusetts has a long history of supporting the many military veterans and their families here who have made difficult sacrifices during their service," said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. "That support includes prioritizing professional licenses for incoming families, and this bill removes additional barriers to household stability and civilian careers for those transferring to military installations in

the Commonwealth.”

The legislation would implement recommendations made by the Division of Occupational Licensure (DOL), formerly the Division of Professional Licensure, in accordance with Executive Order 593, signed by Governor Baker in February 2021. The Executive Order directed the DOL to study interstate compacts and similar agreements relative to licensure for professions licensed by five boards under DOL’s purview. The professions covered by this order were identified by the Air Force and Department of Defense and include physical therapists (and physical therapy assistants); accountants; engineers; psychologists; and barbers and cosmetologists.

Upon implementation of this bill, Massachusetts will be able to participate in the Nurse Licensure Compact, the Physical Therapy Compact, and the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). The participation in these compacts allows qualified practitioners from member states to obtain the ability to practice in Massachusetts via a streamlined process, which reduces regulatory burdens for these professionals while also enhancing access to care for the consumer. In turn, Massachusetts licensees would also benefit from the ability to practice in other states that are part of the compacts.

“Behind each of the Commonwealth’s six military installations are dedicated men and women serving their nation and providing for their families,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. “These military installations drive significant economic activity, and by simplifying the process of transferring professional licenses, we can increase our support for military families relocating to Massachusetts by making it easier for those family members holding professional licenses to continue their careers.”

“The DOL continues to prioritize professional licenses for military personnel and their spouses and is committed to

improving the licensee experience,” said Division of Occupational Licensure Commissioner Layla D’Emilia. “The addition of interstate compacts, streamlined DOL web resources for military-connected applicants, and appointment of dedicated staff to support these applicants helps to further ease the process for military family relocating to Massachusetts.”

“This effort reflects the mission and effectiveness of the Commonwealth’s Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force (MASS-TF) in protecting and strengthening our military installations,” said John Beatty, Executive Director of the MASS-TF. “Led by the Governor’s team, we have worked across the Baker-Polito Administration and with our state legislators, installation leaders, our Mass National Guard, and directly with the Department of Defense, the Air Force, and Army to ensure we arrived at the right initiative that will ensure Massachusetts remains a welcoming place for service members and their families.”

This bill seeks to build on previously enacted laws, including Valor Act I (2012) and Valor Act II (2014), that assist and support military families returning from active duty, or relocating to Massachusetts.

The Commonwealth remains a leader in professional licensure, ensuring that licensees receive proper training to practice in their field safely and competently. This legislation to join interstate compacts will not only assist the military community and licensees, but the citizens of the Commonwealth will have increased access to the best healthcare available.