

November 10, 2020

The Honorable Mike Lee
U.S. Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lee:

On behalf of our 163,000 dentist members, the American Dental Association (ADA) would like to thank you for sponsoring the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2020 (S. 4608).

As you know, this bill would give military spouses with valid professional licenses in one state reciprocity in the state where their spouse is currently serving on military orders. Family member transition support and job security is a military readiness concern. Eliminating this cumbersome hurdle for spouses lessens the stress of relocating which will better prepare our servicemembers to protect the nation. Furthermore, simplifying the spouse's process for securing professional employment presents the opportunity for better economic stability for our military families.

A 2020 Department of Defense study indicated that military spouses face a 24% unemployment rate. This high rate of unemployment is driven in large part by the mobile military life. The Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act will help reduce employment barriers, ensure family stability, and improve quality of life.

It is not uncommon for civilian dentists to be spouses of servicemembers. The ADA routinely supports these spouses through the onerous licensure process upon transfer of duty stations. By simply having a license in good standing according to the requirements in the jurisdiction that issued the license; and by complying with the new state's standards of practice, discipline, and fulfillment of any continuing education requirements, a military spouse could receive professional license reciprocity and easily resume the practice of dentistry. As such, the bill would enhance the dental workforce in military communities which are often health professional shortage areas.

In addition to military spouses, the bill also delivers portability of professional licensure or certification to the relocating servicemember. Streamlining the licensure process for both servicemembers and their spouses will provide a stable platform for military families transitioning out of the military and settling down in the location in which they received military orders.

The ADA strongly supports the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2020. We are stalwart supporters of the brave men and women of our nation's Armed Services, as well as their unwavering families. Thank you for sponsoring this bill and for your leadership on this issue.

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If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Megan Mortimer at 202-898-2402 or mortimerm@ada.org.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Klemmedson, D.D.S, M.D.
President

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Executive Director

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