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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 5, 2025

Kansas House Committee on Health and Human Services
Chairman Will Carpenter
State Capitol, Room 112-N
300 SW 10th Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

Name: Michelle Richart
Organization: United States Department of Defense
Contact: Michelle.a.richart.civ@mail.mil; 703-623-1893
Position: Proponent, HB 2068
Type: Virtual

RE: HB 2069, Enacting the Cosmetology Compact

Dear Carpenter and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense, I am writing in support of the policy changes expressed in HB 2068, a bill that addresses licensing issues affecting our Service members and their families and a measure to reduce barriers for employment in Kansas. I would like to thank you for considering this issue during the 2025 session.

My name is Michelle Richart and I am the Midwest Region Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy. We represent the Department and work with state leaders across the country who are concerned for troops and their families' welfare by harmonizing state and federal law and regulation on policy problems of national significance. These are identified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the National Guard Bureau as areas where states can play a crucial role.

The Department of Defense has advocated for improved licensure and career portability for military Service members and their spouses for several years. Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific professional licensing requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment, with thirty-six percent requiring a state license to practice in their professions and an annual cross-state relocation rate more than ten times higher than their civilian counterparts. Accordingly, military spouses experience unemployment and underemployment at significantly higher rates than their civilian peers.

As our military members and their families move from state-to-state, obtaining licenses in order to obtain employment is very important. These compacts will serve to relieve one of the many stressors of a military move and support military families' financial and personal well-being.

We are grateful for the tremendous effort that Kansas has historically made to support our military members and their families and appreciate the opportunity to support the Cosmetology Compact. Again, thank you for your support of this issue. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Richart", written in a cursive style.

MICHELLE RICHART
Midwest Region Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office