

REPORT 2021

MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT IN CALIFORNIA



CALIFORNIA DEFENSE
CDCA
COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE

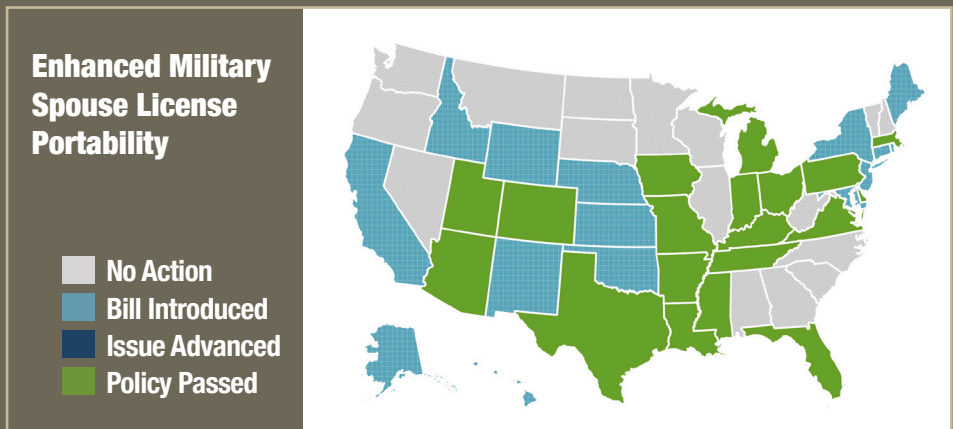
THE CALL TO SERVE

The call to serve that our men and women in uniform respond to when they volunteer to serve in the Armed Services is one reason they are among the most respected individuals in our nation. But the decision to serve and go where ordered is not a sacrifice they make alone, as often their families relocate on short notice with a significant impact on their schooling and careers of their spouses.

Even in the best of times in the pre-pandemic economy, military spouses experienced extraordinarily high unemployment, 24% by several estimates, and as many as half of the military spouses reported that they were unable to work in the field where they were best suited and instead remained “under-employed” in positions that did not require the lengthy and expensive process of clearing the state credentialing hurdles.

California is home to more than 200,000 service-members, many stationed in high-cost areas where the income from a spouse, like so many of their civilian neighbors, is a path to economic survival. While the military has numerous spousal employment programs there still exists many barriers to military spouses achieving full employment, and this experience is often the deciding factor in military retention. This is why the Department of Defense established Defense Liaison Offices and lists Military Spouse Licensing impediments as a 2021 key Issue.

The U.S. Department of Labor ranks California in the bottom third of states in military spouse license recognition. While other states (shown in green) are working to improve the issues most important to military families, California has made only a few incremental improvements to state policy on



licensing for military spouses and transitioning service members. California does not have a state-level policy to facilitate license portability for all licensing boards.

This inaction by California also has a price upon the entire state as the Department of Defense uses this relative ranking as an important factor when making basing decisions. DoD sent notice to state Governors that lack of action to help our military families will result in missions and bases going elsewhere, with the great paying community jobs leaving with them.

CALIFORNIA 2020 MILITARY SPOUSE LEGISLATION

AB2185	Military Spouse Licensing Portability	Failed
AB2549	Military Spouse Temporary Licensing	Failed
AB2631	Military Spouse License Fees	Failed
AB2708	Military Spouse Teacher Credentialing	Failed
AB3045	Military Spouse Licenses	Failed
SB1053	Nurse Licensure Compact	Failed
SB1054	Physical Therapist Compact	Failed
SB1324	Professional License Data Report	Failed

A survey conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2017) indicates military spouses experience higher rates of unemployment than do other adults, and Federal data back up this claim. Based on a survey of 1,273 active-duty military members and veterans, the U.S. Chamber estimates that military spouses and spouses of recent veterans had a 16 percent unemployment rate in 2017.

MILITARY STATISTICS IN CALIFORNIA

\$54.3B National Security Direct Spending in California \$181.2B National Security Total Economic Impact

162,000 Active Duty Service members • 62,000 Spouses of Active Duty • 98,000 Children of Active Duty

Sources: DMDC December 31, 2019 and CA Statewide National Security Economic Impacts December, 2020 Congress' 2021 NDAA language reinforces the Department of Defense position on military family

SEC. 2883. CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN MILITARY FAMILY READ-INESS ISSUES IN MAKING BASING DECISIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN MILITARY UNITS AND MAJOR HEADQUARTERS.

The annual percent of military spouse population that moves across state lines is 14.5% – compared to 1.1% for civilian.





The California Defense Communities Alliance is a 501c4 non-profit organization working on behalf of the military serving in the state of California. We are an alliance of Defense Community organizations and individual members throughout California speaking with one voice to advance the collaboration and communication between the military, our elected officials and our communities. We work to enhance the recognition of the many contributions made by the men and women who serve or have served and the Defense installations where they serve.

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