



U.S. Department of Defense

DEFENSE-STATE LIAISON OFFICE

2023 Key Issues

- Enhanced Military Spouse Licensure Portability
- Military Spouse Occupational Licensure Access
- Licensing Compacts
- Purple Star Schools Program
- Defining Armed Forces in State Policy
- Open Enrollment Flexibility
- Military and Family Life Counselor Licensure Waiver
- Child Abuse Identification and Reporting
- Concurrent Juvenile Jurisdiction
- Licensure Exemptions for Military Family Child Care Providers

Explore Military State Policy Source

Visit our website to access information on key issues, track the status of legislation on these issues across states and connect to official data from the Defense Department.

Learn more at statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil.

**MILITARY
STATE POLICY
SOURCE**

Working With State Policymakers to Support Military Families

Background

The Defense-State Liaison Office works with state policymakers to change laws and policies to improve military family well-being. Each year, the DSLO focuses on 10 key issues. For each issue, the Military State Policy Source website provides background information, official Defense Department data and status updates on relevant information across states.

Purpose

Many issues impacting the well-being of service members and their families are best addressed by state governments. In 2004, the undersecretary of defense for Personnel and Readiness established an outreach program through the DSLO to educate state policymakers on unintended barriers created by state policies and other issues important to military families.

What We Do

The DSLO has eight regional liaisons who live and work in regions of the United States. The liaisons assist state policymakers by providing educational information, identifying “best practice” legislation, and presenting testimony when requested.

Track Record

DSLO has assisted state policymakers to enact more than 700 bills since 2012 covering occupational licensure, employment protection, consumer protection, family law, child care, child protection, voting, education, health care, and state judicial systems.



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2023 Key Issues

Enhanced Military Spouse Licensure Portability: Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific licensure requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment. States can streamline state licensing processes for relocating military spouses by providing them with a license within 30 days with minimal initial paperwork.

Military Spouse Occupational Licensure Access: Accessing applications for military spouses is often a barrier to making use of the state laws that are designed to ease license transfer. States can reduce obstacles spouses experience when applying under state laws by posting easily accessible website content specific to military spouses.

Licensing Compacts: Many military spouse professionals must relicense each time they move to a new state with their active-duty spouse. States can facilitate the ability of professionals, including military spouses, to work across state lines by enacting occupational licensure interstate compacts.

Purple Star Schools Program: Military children experience many challenges as they relocate to new schools due to a parent's change in duty station. By establishing statewide Purple Star Schools programs, states can encourage local education agencies to implement practices that assist military children with transitions/deployments and also recognize military service and civic responsibility.

Defining Armed Forces in State Policy: Recent force structure changes require updates to ensure that states' definitions of military service comport with federal law. States can minimize disruptions in benefits and services for eligible service members and dependents by clearly defining "armed forces."

Open Enrollment Flexibility: Military families are at a disadvantage when it comes to the enrollment options available to their children due to military-directed reassignments. States can provide military families with increased flexibility through access to district open enrollment policies.

Military and Family Life Counselor Licensure Waiver: The state licensure process can be a barrier to providing timely mental health support to service members and families. States can provide a licensure waiver for military and family life counselors to allow for mental health care as needed.

Child Abuse Identification and Reporting: DOD has a statutory obligation to address child abuse and neglect within the military. States can assist the department by requiring local jurisdictions to identify military families and develop reporting and information-sharing procedures between civilian child protective services and military child advocacy.

Concurrent Juvenile Jurisdiction: Exclusive federal jurisdiction on military installations can send juveniles through an adult judicial system. Access to state juvenile and family courts may allow for more suitable outcomes. State lawmakers can remove these barriers and pursue solutions that support military families.

Licensure Exemptions for Military Family Child Care Providers: In many cases, military family child care providers must be licensed or registered by the state in addition to the military. By exempting providers already certified through the military, states enhance the economic status of both the providers and families.

