
**Housing, Community Development &
Veterans Committee**

ESB 6626

Brief Description: Creating the position of military spouse liaison.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, O'Ban, Hunt, Zeiger, Hobbs, Becker, Randall, Short, Brown and Wagoner.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Creates the position of the Military Spouse Liaison within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Requires the Department of Health to waive all fees related to licensing for military spouses and registered domestic partners.
- Requires Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to develop a plan and timeline to address certain concerns related to the nurse licensure compact.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is a state agency created in 1975. The powers and duties of the DVA include cooperating with local governments and the federal government, particularly regarding participation in federal grants-in-aid programs relating to veterans and veterans affairs. The DVA provides many services to veterans and their families, including medical care, assistance with claims for benefits, estate management, counseling, and financial assistance. The DVA assists veterans with education, training, and employment.

Licensing Fees - Department of Health.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Department of Health (DOH) directly regulates or collaborates with a board or commission to oversee a variety of health care professions, including physicians, nurses, and dentists. The secretary of the DOH must establish the amount of all application fees, license fees, registration fees, examination fees, permit fees, renewal fees, and any other fee associated with licensing or regulation of professions, occupations, or businesses administered by the DOH.

Nurse Licensure.

The Nursing Quality Assurance Commission is responsible for licensure, license renewal, and discipline of registered nurses (RN) and licensed practical nurses (LPN). To receive an RN or LPN license, an applicant must:

- successfully complete an approved nursing education program;
- complete seven clock hours of AIDS education;
- successfully pass a licensure examination; and
- submit the required documentation.

An RN or LPN who is licensed in another state or territory of the United States that meets all other requirements for licensure in Washington may receive a license without examination.

Interstate Nursing Licensure Compact.

The Interstate Nursing Licensure Compact (Compact) is a proposal to create a system for expediting the licensure for RNs and LPNs already licensed by another state. States must enact model legislation in order to adopt the Compact and become a member to the licensure agreement. As of January 2020, 34 states have enacted the Compact and become party to the agreement.

Summary of Bill:

Military Spouse Liaison.

The position of military spouse liaison (liaison) is created within the DVA. The duties of the liaison include, but are not limited to:

- conducting outreach to and advocating on behalf of military spouses in Washington;
- providing assistance and information to military spouses seeking professional licenses and credentials or other employment in Washington;
- coordinating research on issues facing military spouses and creating informational materials to assist military spouses and their families;
- examining barriers and providing recommendations to assist spouses in access high quality child care and developing resources in coordination with military installations and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to increase access to high quality child care for military families; and
- developing, in coordination with the Employment Security Department and Employers, a common form for military spouses to complete highlighting specific skills, education, and training to help spouses find meaningful employment in relevant economic sectors.

The liaison is encouraged to periodically report on the work of the liaison to the relevant committees of the Legislature and the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs and participate in policy development related to military spouses.

Fee Waiver.

All application, licensing, and other fees related to licensing in professions regulated by the DOH are waived for spouses and registered domestic partners of military service members, National Guard members, and armed forces reservists.

Nurse Licensure Compact.

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission must work with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Licensure Compact Administrators to develop a plan and timeline, to be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2021, to address concerns with the nurse licensure compact regarding financing, educational requirements, and data tracking.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 24, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.