

Governor Markell, Legislators Announce Legislation to Assist Transitioning Veterans

Bill helps veterans obtain professional licenses

✘ **Dover, DE** – Recognizing an unnecessary obstacle that has prevented Delawareans who serve our country from pursuing economic opportunities at home, Governor Markell and members of the General Assembly today announced legislation that would help veterans obtain and renew professional licenses. House Bill 296, sponsored by Rep. Earl Jaques and Sens. Brian Bushweller and Bruce Ennis, allows professional licensing boards to recognize military education, training, and experience when reviewing credentials and issuing licenses. This change would assist service personnel and their spouses in obtaining and/or renewing professional licenses when transitioning from active duty.

“It’s wrong when military medical personnel return from treating members of our armed forces overseas and want to pursue the same line of work in Delaware, but are told they must complete an entire educational program because they don’t have the right training or experience to obtain a nursing license in our state,” said Governor Markell. “These situations occur across a variety of professions because our laws haven’t allowed the experience of military training and service to satisfy licensing requirements. The legislation we’re proposing corrects the flaws in our licensing system that have inadvertently, but unacceptably, worked against our service members and their spouses.”

HB 296 further allows boards to issue temporary licenses to service personnel when he or she holds a valid license from another state. The current Delaware law only allows Boards to

do so for military spouses.

“Today’s Delaware National Guard is very different than what you might remember from decades ago. Our guardsmen bring a variety of professional skills to the table that help the Guard function as a modern military unit,” said Rep. Jaques, D-Glasgow. “Unfortunately, when our guardsmen are called to active duty, their work in their applied trade does not count toward the experience that licensing boards require. These guardsmen essentially are being penalized for their service because they fall behind their professional counterparts who aren’t in the military. By helping our military personnel obtain credit for the work they put in while serving our country, we are respecting their service and ensuring that they aren’t penalized in their professional development.”

Delaware has made progress in giving Veterans the support they have earned. According to the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, the Delaware unemployment rate for our most recent returning veterans – those categorized as Gulf War II Veterans – plummeted from 12.9 percent to 6.4 percent from the end of 2011 to the end of 2013. However, at a news conference announcing HB 296, the Governor and bill sponsors emphasized that there is more work to do to support our past and present service members and their families.

“We have a lot of highly skilled service members right here at Dover Air Force Base who see what Delaware has to offer and want to stay here when their tour of duty ends and we want to make it as easy as possible to keep those skills in Delaware,” said Sen. Bushweller, D-Dover. “This helps take us from talking about helping our veterans succeed in civilian



Deshawn Jenkins offers his support for HB 296.

life to actually doing something to help our veterans both

stay here and succeed in civilian life.”

“This makes sense,” said Sen. Ennis, D-Smyrna. “We all recognize the high-quality training our service members receive. This simply makes it easier to switch those skills from the

military to civilian worlds.”

“This legislation is going to offer us the opportunities to use what we’ve learned and the training that we’ve had around the world and bring those experiences to Delaware,” said Deshawn Jenkins, a nurse who served as a medic in the Air Force and had difficulty obtaining a license to get a job when he left the military.

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