

Law Changed to Help Give Delaware Veterans Fair Access to Jobs

Governor signs bill to end unnecessary requirements for receiving professional licenses

Dover, DE – Eliminating an unnecessary obstacle for Delawareans who serve our country to pursue economic opportunities at home, Governor Markell joined members of the General Assembly and veterans at the [Air Mobility Command Museum](#) at Dover Air Force Base to sign legislation that allows veterans to more fairly compete for jobs.



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[House Bill 296](#), sponsored by Rep. Earl Jaques (D-Glasgow) and Sens. Brian Bushweller (D-Dover) and Bruce Ennis (D-Smyrna), allows professional licensing boards to recognize military education, training, and experience when reviewing credentials and issuing licenses. This change will assist service personnel in obtaining and/or renewing professional licenses when transitioning from active duty.

The Governor noted that, before today, medical personnel returning from treating members of the armed forces overseas

were told they must complete an entire educational program because they didn't have the right training or experience to obtain a nursing license in Delaware. Similar circumstances affected veterans in a variety of professions.

"As a state and as a nation, we have no more sacred responsibility than to ensure that the men and women who sign up to serve us have fair opportunities to succeed when their tours of duty are over," said Markell. "And it's not complicated to realize that they will only get those opportunities if they can compete for jobs on a level playing field with everyone else. House Bill 296 corrects the flaws in our licensing system that have inadvertently, but unacceptably, worked against our service members and their families."

HB 296 further allows boards to issue temporary licenses to service personnel when they hold a valid license from another state. The current Delaware law only allows Boards to do so for military spouses.

"We passed legislation last year to aid military spouses with state professional licensure, and when we learned this was a problem for military members themselves, we immediately crafted this bill to remedy that," said Rep. Earl Jaques, D-Glasgow, who chairs the House Veterans Affairs Committee. "Any time we can assist veterans, guardsmen and reservists with their transitions to the civilian world, we want to do so."

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 the 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. Today's bill signing marks another step in supporting servicemen and women 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 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.”



Governor Markell signs
House Bills 296 and 324.

Among those celebrating the bill signing was 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. He visited Legislative Hall this year to urge the General Assembly to change the law so other service members would not experience the same impediments to successfully transitioning to civilian life.

“This law will make a difference for veterans,” said Jenkins. “I’m proud that today Delaware is taking this step to fully recognize how military experience and training can help veterans contribute to the state’s workforce and economy. I thank the Governor and the legislators who listened to veterans concerned about this issue and made sure it was fixed.”

At today’s event, Markell also signed [House Bill 324](#), sponsored by Rep. Jaques, which creates special motor vehicle license plates for the purpose of honoring Delaware’s veterans.

“There are so many Delawareans who want to do something to

support our military and the men and women who have served, but who don't have a direct connection to the military," said Rep. Jaques. "The special plate lets those folks show their support, as well as contribute to the Veterans Trust Fund we established to provide direct aid to veterans in our communities."

[VIDEO Veterans Bill Signing](#)

[PHOTOS Veterans Bill Signing](#)