



November 2, 2021

The Honorable Mike Lee
U.S. Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Garcia
U.S. House of Representatives
1535 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Lee and Representative Garcia:

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) extends our gratitude for your sponsorship of the *Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2021* (S.1084 and H.R.2650) and are pleased to offer our support of this legislation.

APhA is the largest association of pharmacists in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care, and enhance public health.

Your legislation would allow military spouses with a valid professional license in one state, such as a registered pharmacist, reciprocity in the jurisdiction where their servicemember is currently serving on military orders. If passed, the bill would ease the time-consuming and costly process of re-licensing, ultimately lessening the stress of relocating for military spouses, servicemembers, and their families. Through promoting maintenance of professional licensure (and therefore, employment) for spouses amid numerous relocations, the *Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act* would foster improved economic stability for military families.

Through providing a copy of military orders; maintaining a license in good standing according to the requirements of the jurisdiction that issued the license; and by complying with the new state's standards of practice, discipline, and continuing education requirements, a military spouse could receive professional license reciprocity and smoothly resume the practice of pharmacy. The *Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act* would enhance the pharmacy workforce in military communities, which are often within health professional shortage areas.

According to the US Department of Labor, 34% of employed military spouses work in occupations that require licenses.¹ In 2021, the National Military Spouse Network published a report citing that nearly a quarter of military spouses were unemployed – a statistic staggeringly higher than the national unemployment rate, which currently hovers around 5% as of August 2021.²

On average, active-duty military families move every two to three years and military spouses face difficulty transferring occupational licensure from state to state, often delaying their return to the workforce after a move.³ Currently, some states offer license reciprocity, although these agreements vary greatly from state to state - some have reciprocal agreements with all other states, while others only have agreements with one or two bordering states.⁴ The current patchwork, state-specific legislation makes navigating permanent change of station (PCS) orders difficult for military spouses and families. Your bill would provide uniform federal policy and encourage ease of continued licensure and employment for military spouses.

APhA strongly supports the *Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2021*. Thank you for introducing this bill and for your leadership on this issue.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Kerry J. Mica at amica@aphanet.org or 202.429.7507.

Sincerely,



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Senior Vice President, Pharmacy Practice and Government Affairs
American Pharmacists Association

¹ US Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau. *Military Spouses Fact Sheet*. <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/mib/WB-MilSpouse-factsheet.pdf>

² National Military Spouse Network. *Roadmap to Employment Stability for Military Spouses: Five Recommendations to Build Financial Security Throughout the Military Lifecycle*. https://www.nationalmilitaryspousenetwork.org/public/images/2021_White_Paper_NMSN.pdf

³ National Conference of State Legislatures. *National Employment Monthly Update*. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/national-employment-monthly-update.aspx>

⁴ US Department of Labor, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. *Military Spouse Interstate License Recognition Options*. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/veterans/military-spouses/license-recognition#f1>