

Testimony of Deputy Director of Policy Andrew Lafratte
Pennsylvania Department of State
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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committees to provide an update on the Department of State's Military and Veterans Licensure Program, which has significantly reduced barriers for service members, veterans, and their families seeking professional licensure in Pennsylvania.

Act 35 of 2022 (Act 35) was passed unanimously by the House and Senate and signed into law in July 2022. Act 35 improved the professional licensing process administered through the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) for military applicants - veterans, active-duty service members, and military spouses. Since 2023, BPOA has approved nearly 6,000 licensure applications submitted by military applicants.

Act 35 directed BPOA to implement several reforms to streamline licensure processes and remove unnecessary obstacles for military applicants, including:

- Expedited review of applications submitted by military applicants.
- Waiver of initial licensure fees for military spouses relocating to Pennsylvania due to military orders.
- Allowing reactivation of a license without penalty due to deployment.
- Development of a military occupational code crosswalk to assess the extent to which military training and experience align with Pennsylvania's requirements for licensure.

The crosswalk serves as a tool to identify substantial equivalencies between military occupational qualifications and state licensure standards, as well as any gaps in education, training, or experience. It assists licensing boards and commissions, employers, and members of the veteran community in understanding how military experience translates to civilian professional practice. The crosswalk is available on the Department's website, and since its launch in 2023, it has been accessed more than 2,500 times.

Additionally, in 2025 the Shapiro Administration fully implemented three healthcare licensure compacts, enabling qualified physicians, nurses, and physical therapists to practice more easily across multiple states. In 2026, the General Assembly enacted legislation entering Pennsylvania into the Counseling, Occupational Therapy, and Cosmetology compacts, all signed by Governor Shapiro and are set to be implemented in

2027. These compacts further expand opportunities for military applicants and spouses to practice their professions in the Commonwealth with reduced administrative burden.