

ISSUE BRIEF: LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL

The Situation

- The Department of Defense (DOD) establishes occupational classifications for each military specialty in the armed forces. However, training received in military occupational specialties is not typically recognized to fulfill the certification and licensure requirements of equivalent civilian occupations in states where veterans reside after their military service.
- The *Veterans' Licensing and Certification Demonstration* Report was issued in September 2015, and concluded licensing and certification strategies are often state and occupation specific; therefore, communication among these entities should be improved to support licensure and certification for veterans among state agencies, the federal government, the military, educational institutions, and the private sector.
- DOD currently operates a program to enable members of the armed forces to obtain, while serving in the armed forces, professional credentials that translate into civilian occupations.

The Challenge

- Unfortunately, DOD's current training standards are unlikely to satisfy the various requirements necessary to obtain certifications and licensure for 50 different states, each of whom have their own certifying standards.
- The *Veterans' Licensing and Certification Demonstration* project determined that no single entity or state agency has the full range of information and capacity to establish accelerated pathways to a standardized certification process. In fact, technical knowledge needed to identify strategies, and the authority to make changes, are spread across multiple agencies and sectors.

The Solution

- Congress should continue strong oversight of DOD's programs to better assist members of the armed forces in obtaining professional licensure and certification credentials.
- Congress should enact legislation to establish permanency to the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) authorized in the VOW to Hire Our Heroes Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-56).
- Congress should engage in a national dialogue with the Administration, DOD, the Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL, as well as state governments, employers, trade unions, and licensure and credentialing entities to resolve existing barriers to employment for our nation's veterans. A clear process must be established so that military training meets equivalent civilian certification and licensure requirements for veterans.