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House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
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Chairman Tarwater and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB2506 to you.

Yesterday, February 11th, we heard from Brookings Institution that “talent is the #1 things that drives growth.” People are moving out of Kansas, according to Brookings, because of job opportunities elsewhere.

In 2015, Kansas Governor signed into law HB2154. This act provided for military spouses with out of state licenses to receive a Kansas occupational license. In talking with superintendents and business leaders in Wichita, Manhattan and Leavenworth, I realized the potential for growing the talent base across the state. They also identified a few roadblocks for spouses, e.g. the two-month delay in issuing the license and the intentional lack of implementing the law. The result is that many military spouses go to Missouri or Oklahoma who has a fast track program. In the case of Fort Riley, the military employment agency had no idea there was a law supporting military spouses. The military employment agency has been diligently working with state boards to attempt to ease the burden of getting licenses for military spouses, yet no mention by the boards of the law authorizing the process of reciprocal licensing.

According to annual census data, Kansas has approximately 90,000 new residents annually, 10,000 less than Arizona who was the first to enact this act. According to the Arizona Majority Leader and the Goldwater Institute, Arizona Boards of Licensing have experience very little increase in new workload as a result of passing this bill. They expect this to grow slightly but do not expect significant additional work requirements.

This bill will remove barriers and get new residents to work faster. By recognizing occupational licensees from other states with a few requirements, like being in good standing. It acknowledges that these professionals don't lose their skills and experience when they move to Kansas. Yesterday, the President of the Board of Regents proudly proclaimed in my office that Kansas is the BEST at recognizing what military professionals possess in knowledge, skills and experiences. We need to do the same for all professionals that want to move to Kansas and become Kansas residents.

I respectfully request your support for HB2506. Let's speed up the process. Let's strengthen our talent base. Let's signal to the rest of the world that Kansas is open for business and that this state is setting the conditions to grow.

Respectfully,


Chris Croft