



March 13, 2024

Madame Chair and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and our 1,400 members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 2745, AN ACT concerning occupational licensing; relating to occupational licensing, certification and registration fees; providing that military spouses of active military servicemembers shall be exempted from all such fees; amending K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 48-3406 and repealing the existing section.

This legislation passed the House 119-0 and would exempt the spouses of active-duty military members from all application, licensing, registration, certification, and or permit fees associated with an occupational license. Adopting this policy would save military families money and, in some instances, allow military spouses to enter the Kansas workforce more quickly.

The Chamber introduced this legislation at the request of the Chamber's Military Affairs Council. This council provides civilian support to McConnell AFB and engages in every component of the military and veteran's spectrum, with particular attention paid to the well-being of veterans as a substantial component of the regional workforce. The committee works diligently to provide support to the base, its members, and their spouses in an ongoing effort to show the United States Department of Defense that Wichita is a great home for military installations and operations.

While the state of Kansas has taken several steps to assist in removing red tape to make entering the workforce by military spouses easier, there is more that could and should be done. Eliminating licensure and application fees would save military families precious resources and, in many cases, accelerate their entrance into the Kansas workforce. While this bill aims to provide benefits and support for our military families, it also should be noted that it would benefit Kansas employers in their search for talented and experienced workers.

H.B. 2745 is a commonsense bill and is good public policy. With that in mind, we urge the Committee to report H.B. 2745 favorable for passage.

Thank you, and I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins