



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

March 5, 2025

**Maine State Legislature
Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333**

**Senator Donna Bailey, Senate Chair
Representative Kristi Mathieson, House Chair**

**Remarks of
Melissa J. Willette
New England Region Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office**

Support: LD 409 - An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Licensed Massage Therapists Across State Lines

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense (DoD), I am writing to express support for the policies expressed within LD 409, as it relates to licensed massage therapists.

My name is Melissa Willette, and I am the New England Region Liaison at the Defense-State Liaison Office. Our mission is to be a resource to state policymakers as they work to address issues negatively impacting our military families.

The Department of Defense has advocated for improved licensure and career portability for military service members and their spouses for several years. Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific professional licensing requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment, with thirty-six percent requiring a state license to practice in their professions and an annual cross-state relocation rate more than ten times higher than their civilian counterparts. Accordingly, military spouses experience unemployment and underemployment at significantly higher rates than their civilian peers.

We are grateful for the committee's consideration and deliberation of this policy. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at melissa.j.willette3.civ@mail.mil or 703-623-2035.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Melissa J. Willette
New England Region Liaison
(CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
Defense-State Liaison Office**