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April 5, 2021

Senator Louis Luchini, Senate Chair
Representative Chris Caiazzo, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

RE: LD 827 “An Act to Help Veterans Access Jobs, Education and Housing”
Public Hearing: Monday, April 5, 2021 @ 9:00 a.m.

Dear Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and Members of the Committee:

The Maine Board of Dental Practice (“the Board”) supports military families and its current statutory provisions and adopted policies already give preference to veterans and military spouses seeking licensure as a dental professional. However, the bill as drafted would remove the Board’s ability to consider applications on a case by case basis to determine whether minimum competencies are met to ensure public protection. The Board believes this bill is not necessary given the existing licensure provisions and policies highlighted below:

1. Endorsement licensure process: 32 M.R.S. §18347 and Board Rules Chapter 11 – these licensure regulations authorize the Board to grant licensure to an individual who holds an active, valid license in another state. The Board delegates the daily review and approval of licensure applications to board staff to avoid unnecessary delays and/or barriers to licensure. Generally speaking, once all the application materials have been submitted and reviewed by board staff a licensee will be issued within days.
2. Temporary licensure process: 10 M.R.S. §8003(5)(G) and various licensure chapters (Board Rules Chapters 2, 5 and 6) – these licensure regulations authorize the Board to grant temporary license to an individual who holds an active, valid license in another state without verification of education and examination. Rather, verification of an active, valid license is the substantive requirement for a temporary license. The temporary license process is rarely used as the endorsement licensure process is just as efficient and a full, unrestricted license is more desirable than that of a temporary license. Again, board staff manages this licensure process daily.

3. Board Policy on Veterans Preference: 10 M.R.S. §8011 provides existing statutory authority for the Board to prioritize and issue licenses, including temporary licenses, to military veterans, active duty members and/or their spouses. The Board adopted its veterans preference policy utilized by board staff on June 14, 2019, which is attached for your review.

Again, if the intent of LD 827 is to remove administrative barriers to license otherwise qualified military veterans, active duty members and/or their spouses on an expedited basis, then please note that the Board's existing regulations and processes accomplish that very goal. However, if the purpose of the legislation is to grant temporary licensure as a means for an individual to practice while simultaneously completing a licensure requirement, such as graduating from a doctoral degree program or successfully completing the required clinical examination, then the Board would have serious concerns regarding public protection.

The Board's statutory mission is to protect the public and they do that by issuing licenses to individuals who meet the minimum standards for licensure such as successful completion of an educational program and passage of the required examinations to ensure competent practice. The Board respectfully cannot support a licensure bill that appears either duplicative to existing licensure processes or allows an individual who has not yet completed the minimum requirements needed to practice competently.

I would be happy to attend the scheduled work session and provide any additional information as needed.

Sincerely,

Penny Vaillancourt

Penny Vaillancourt
Executive Director

Attachment

Maine Board of Dental Practice
Policy on Veterans Preference

The Maine Board of Dental Practice shall, as its policy, process any applications for temporary or permanent licenses received from Veterans or Gold Star Spouses as a priority before those of other applicants. This policy shall conform to the provisions of 10 M.R.S. §8011 and include those exceptions set forth in that section.

"Veteran" is defined as a person who has served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces including the Reserves of the United States Armed Forces and the National Guard and received a discharge other than dishonorable. The Office requires the submission of a DD Form 214.

"Gold star spouse" is defined as a widow or widower of a veteran who is eligible to receive a gold star lapel pin under 10 United States Code, Section 1126 (2010). The Office requires the submission of the DD Form 1300.

In order to receive priority, applicants must identify themselves as a veteran or gold star spouse by submitting the appropriate form with their application (Submission of DD Form 214, or DD Form 1300 referenced above). Applicants who have questions about veterans preference should contact the Maine Board of Dental Practice at (207) 287-3333 or email dental.board@maine.gov

Adopted June 14, 2019