**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**
**(MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY)**
**4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON**
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000**

DoD-State Liaison Office

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 1/24/13
HB 259

23 January 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hunter
Montana State House
State Capitol Building
Helena, Montana

Dear Representative Hunter:

I am writing to you in regards to your hearing on HB259, concerning acceptance of applicable military training and experience toward professional and occupational licenses. I will not be available to attend the hearing and wish to submit the following as testimony describing the importance of this issue to the military community.

I'm Jacline Harriman Department of Defense Regional State Liaison for the Western region, working for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and I am a combat veteran. My office partners with states on 10 quality of life issues affecting military families. After soliciting feedback from all the military service branches and service organizations, it was determined that state licensing and professional credentialing requirements can limit employment and career options for separating or retiring service members. This is one of our top priority issues to facilitate better transition from military to civilian careers.

In 2011, the Department of Defense began supporting efforts to ask states to give separating service members credit, so that they may not be delayed in finding employment or finishing a degree. We have discovered that separating service members are out of sync with state licensure processes that normally address the needs of applicants who have qualified through private sector schools and training. We are asking states to establish policies that ensure separating service members do not have to repeat requirements completed during their military career to obtain academic credit or an occupational license.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011) reported the unemployment rate at 17.5% for post 9/11 veterans in Montana. Given this problem, this issue is now on the Department of Defense top ten quality of life issues for 2013. The Department of Defense has many state of the art schools which train service members in a wide variety of skills and occupations. When state regulators do not recognize and accept military training and experience, it creates an additional burden and hardship upon the veteran.

The Department of Defense works earnestly with the US Department of Labor to link military occupations with training and experience programs that most closely align to the private sector licensure requirements. We still need state regulators to consider the feasibility of the separated or retired servicemembers applicable training.

Montana is home to 102,986 veterans (DVA), and is a desired location for separating and retiring military members when choosing where to live after leaving service. Providing them a hand-up to transition and rebuild a new life after service is good for the veteran and good for the community in which they reside.

Sincerely,

//signed//

Jacline L. Harriman, MA, LPC
Western Region State Liaison