



**Reserve Officers Association of the United States**

**United States House Hearing**

**House Veterans' Affairs Committee**

**A Review of Licensing and Credentialing Standards for Service Members and Veterans: Do Barriers Still Remain?**

**September 10, 2015**

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*"Serving Citizen Warriors through Advocacy and Education since 1922."™*

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The Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA) is a professional association of commissioned, non-commissioned and warrant officers of our nation's seven uniformed services. ROA was founded in 1922 during the drawdown years following the end of World War I. It was formed as a permanent institution dedicated to national defense, with a goal to teach America about the dangers of unpreparedness. Under ROA's 1950 congressional charter, our purpose is to promote the development and execution of policies that will provide adequate national defense. We do so by developing and offering expertise on the use and resourcing of America's reserve components.

The association's members include Reserve and Guard Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who frequently serve on active duty to meet critical needs of the uniformed services. ROA's membership also includes commissioned officers from the United States Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who often are first responders during national disasters and help prepare for homeland security.

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#### DISCLOSURE OF FEDERAL GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

The Reserve Officers and is a member-supported organization. ROA has not received grants, contracts, or subcontracts from the federal government in the past three years. All other activities and services of the associations are accomplished free of any direct federal funding.

On behalf of our members, the Reserve Officers Association thanks the committee for the opportunity to submit a statement on the issues of licensing and credentialing

## **LICENSING**

Approximately 5% of all workers in the 1950s were required to be licensed by the government. The number is now up to 30-35% according to *The Fast Track to Civilian Employment: Streamlining Credentialing and Licensing For Service Members, Veterans, and their Spouses*, Executive Office of the President (2013). Most of these licenses require annual fees, paperwork, and continuing education. Many Guard and Reserve members are unable to complete these renewal requirements while deployed, and are forced to let their licenses expire. The requirements for obtaining a license are usually more stringent than those for renewing one before it expires. This creates an additional hurdle for troops returning home, especially for Reservists and Guardsmen immediately returning to civilian employment.

### **Extensions on Active Duty**

States have begun passing legislation granting automatic extensions for service members unable to complete licensing renewal requirements in a timely manner, because of the unique demands of active duty. Kentucky enacted such a law in 2011, granting active duty service members extensions on state regulated occupational licensing renewal requirements when “circumstances associated with military duty” prevent service members from completing said requirements. This includes dues or fees, obtaining education credits, and “any other act typically required for the renewal of the license or certificate.”

The attached list shows that many states do not allow for automatic extension of driver’s licenses but will process requests for extensions. The lack of an automatic extension can cause problems for service members who are performing duty away from station: they do not have access to all of the information or documents required for extension requests. ***ROA urges states to grant automatic extensions.***

Other states have enacted similar laws, but Kentucky’s remains one of the best. Notable features of Kentucky’s law are:

- Kentucky’s law allows extensions for active duty military personnel who are prevented from completing licensing renewal requirements due to “circumstances associated with military duty.”

Some state laws only allow extensions for service members who are called to active duty for the purpose of serving in an emergency or war. This could be problematic for military personnel who cannot complete license renewal requirements due to training or other such obligations. A

Marine Corps officer, for example, must complete ten weeks of Officer Candidate School, six months of Basic School, and at least two months of Military Occupational Specialty School, usually one right after the other. This long period of training would not be covered under a law granting extensions to service members called to serve in an emergency or time of war, but would be covered under the broad language of the Kentucky law. By allowing extensions for all “circumstances associated with military duty,” the law covers any conceivable scenario.

### **Continuing Education Requirements**

- Kentucky’s law grants extensions for continuing education requirements, fees, and *any other act typically required for the renewal of the license or certificate* (emphasis added).

Some states have provisions granting extensions for fees and continuing education requirements, but fail to add catchalls, like the one in the Kentucky law, for irregular licensing requirements. Many licenses only require fees and continuing education for renewal, but some require additional requirements. For example, some licenses carry annual pro bono requirements, which a service member would not be able to meet while on deployment. Such a requirement falls outside the normal fees and continuing education hours necessary to keep licenses in good standing with the state.

For that reason, it is necessary to have catch-all clauses, like the one in the Kentucky law or specific provisions like Missouri, whose statute, Section 41.946.1, provides exemption from requirements for members of the reserve component who were ordered to active duty.

#### **Missouri: Licensure or certification by state, continuing education--exemption from requirements for active military service.**

41.946. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person licensed or certified to practice a trade or profession by the state of Missouri or any branch or agency thereof which requires an annual period of continuing education or training as a condition of continued or renewed licensing or certification, and who is or becomes a member of the National Guard or of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States who is called to full-time active duty in the service of the United States under competent orders shall, during the period of full-time active duty, be exempted from any such requirement for continuing education or training without his status, license, certification or right to practice his trade or profession being affected and shall not be required, upon returning from full-time active duty, to make up or retake any training or education for which he was exempt under the provisions of this section.

Since more than 900,000 Guard and Reserve members have been activated for Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom, it is essential for all states to have similar statutes.

***ROA urges states to adopt statutes that extend or exempt continuing education requirements.***

## **Extensions after Discharge**

- The Kentucky law allows the extension to continue for “a period of at least six (6) months after discharge from active duty.”

Having such a provision is essential to any legislation granting extensions for licensing renewing requirements. Returning service members need adequate time, upon returning to civilian life, to fulfill the licensing renewal requirements they were unable to fulfill while on active duty.

Without such a provision, this law would be ineffective. Service members’ licenses would lapse as soon as they returned home, placing them in the same position as if their licenses had lapsed while they were on active duty.

New Jersey directs that extensions be accomplished within two weeks of demobilization, but that does not adequately accommodate service members who do not immediately return to their residence. From the state’s Motor Vehicle Commission website:

### **New Jersey License Extensions**

If you are on active military duty, including New Jersey National Guard and Reserve, you are entitled to automatic extensions for your driver license, registration and inspection requirements.

- Your license, registration and inspection documents will remain valid for as long as you are actively serving in the US Military
- If you are demobilized, you will need to renew your expired documents within two weeks of your demobilization date
- Law enforcement officials are aware of this extension. Please carry the [extension letter \[pdf\]](#) along with your active duty military credentials at all times when operating a vehicle

Additionally, some Guard and Reserve members put household goods in storage and are waiting to have them delivered. This is not always timely depending on whether or not it is during peak periods of “change of station” orders, which take priority. ***ROA urges states to provide “a period of at least six (6) months after discharge from active duty.”***

## **CREDENTIALING**

Another problem ROA has identified is how military members can meet licensing and credentialing requirements as they leave active duty. Service members can encounter delays in seeking employment after discharge even though they have experience and education however; it is not recognized for licensing and credentialing. Each year approximately 250,000 service

members leave the service. The military's ability to meet the professional standards for certification would be a great enabler of reservists who want to work in these fields.

***In 2014 alone, the Army paid more than \$320 million in unemployment compensation, according to data from the Army. During that same period, 61,000 former soldiers applied for unemployment compensation.***  
<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/enlisted/2015/03/23/army-credentialing-every-mos/25049105/>

In the past few years, the Department of Defense Military Credentialing Pilot made progress in identifying weaknesses in training. For example, the Automotive Mechanics pilot had 35 service members in it, but only 3 of 30 (10%) successfully passed a Medium-Heavy Truck Certification T-Series exam and 3 of 5 (60%) successfully passed the Automobile Service Consultant Certification C1 exam. It was disheartening to see that military training could not meet The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) standards. This is just one example of many in DoD's report to Congress.

The Army's Training and Doctrine Command has embraced the opportunity to provide credentialing by working to link credentialing to Army military occupational specialties. The Navy has been working on credentialing since 2006 and the Air Force has been working with the Federal Aviation Administration to meet airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanic certification. Budgetary pressures could easily stunt credentialing, but ensuring that training standards include credentialing can result in a better trained force as well as the success of service members as they transition into the civilian sector. The Department of Defense will continue to rely on a force mix of military, civilians, and contractors. Credentialing service members will ensure they are equipped to successfully contribute within this force model. ***ROA encourages Congress to continue funding for licensing and credentialing of military members.***

## CLOSING

ROA appreciates the opportunity to discuss the importance of licensing and credentialing; we look forward to working with Congress to offer our support and perspective on the Reserve Components and this important area of policy and legislation.

## Changes to Drivers License

STATE	POLICY
Alabama	No automatic extension. 60 day grace period. Renewal by mail. Applications are available online.
Alaska	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 90 days after return to Alaska <b>or</b> 90 days after date of discharge, whether you have returned to Alaska or not.
Arizona	Automatic extension valid for up to 6 months, with <b>notification of active duty status</b> to MVD.
Arkansas	No automatic extension. Renewal by phone (501) 682-7059
California	No automatic extension. Must call DMV at (800) 777-0133 to update your record, and will be issued DL 236 card to carry with your California driver's license.
Colorado	No automatic extension. Must request a military extension. Fax signed request with copy of ID or Orders to 303-205-5990.
Connecticut	No automatic extension.
Delaware	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.
Florida	No automatic extension. Must request extension. Free military extension card for active-duty, and dependents for 90 days after discharge. Renewal online (GoRenew), by mail, or Fax..
Georgia	No automatic extension. 6 month grace period. Renewal by mail.
Hawaii	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 90 days after return to Hawaii <b>or</b> 90 days after date of discharge, whether you have returned to Hawaii or not.
Idaho	No automatic extension. Must request a military extension
Illinois	No automatic extension. Must obtain a Military Deferral Certificate (217-782-2720)
Indiana	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 90 days after discharge,
Iowa	No automatic extension. Must request for an Extension for Military Service – Form 430081
Kansas	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail. Applications are available online.
Kentucky	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.
Louisiana	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 60 days after discharge, must send written request to have license flagged as military.
Maine	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 30 days after discharge,
Maryland	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 30 days after discharge, or return to state.
Massachusetts	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.
Michigan	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail. (517) 322-1473)
Minnesota	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 90 days after discharge, must send written request to have license flagged as military.
Mississippi	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 90 days after discharge,
Missouri	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail. (573) 751-2730)
Montana	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 30 days after discharge, to obtain a military exemption or to renew call (866) 450-8034 or e-mail <a href="mailto:mvd@mt.gov">mvd@mt.gov</a> .
Nebraska	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 60 days following discharge or return to Nebraska, whichever is later.
Nevada	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.
New Hampshire	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail. Applications (DSMV-450, DSMV-76) are available online.
New Jersey	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid two weeks after discharge, must carry the extension letter, available online.

New Mexico	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 30 days following discharge or return to New Mexico.
New York	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid six months after discharge, must File Form MV-75. (Notification of Military Service)
North Carolina	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.
North Dakota	Automatic extension for military personnel, valid 30 days following discharge or return to North Dakota. Contact DMV every four years to ensure record remains on file.
Ohio	Extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 6 months following discharge or return to Ohio record will read "Expired". Renewal by mail available.
Oklahoma	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid 60 days following discharge or return to Oklahoma.
Oregon	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail. Request a "Valid without Photo" driver license packet by calling the DMV at (503) 945-5400.
Pennsylvania	Automatic extension for military personnel and dependents; valid for 45 days after discharge, must File Form DL-176 (Military Status Endorsement Card) to ensure record remains on file.
Rhode Island	No automatic extension. May apply for a special armed forces operator's license, valid for 30 days after discharge. This special license carries no specific time frame for renewal.
South Carolina	No automatic extension. Renewal by online.
South Dakota	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail by following the state's instructions.
Tennessee	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid for 60 days after discharge or return to Tennessee. Military personnel may have a "Code 30" placed on their license (which will indicate the license does not expire).
Texas	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid for 90 days after discharge or return to Texas.
Utah	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid for 90 days after discharge or return to Utah.
Vermont	Automatic extension for Military personnel validates existing license for up to four years from the date it expires. Must renew within 30 days of discharge.
Virginia	No automatic extension. Military extension via online or by mail. Must carry Card. Extension good for 3 years only
Washington	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid for 90 days after discharge. State issues a license to military service members and their families with the word "military" in the place of the expiration date.
West Virginia	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid for 6 months after discharge.
Wisconsin	Automatic extension for Military personnel, valid 30 days after return to Wisconsin or 90 days after discharge, whichever is earlier.
Wyoming	No automatic extension. Renewal by mail.

Source:

[http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&ved=0CEYQFjAGahUKEwiSpvW73ufHAhXPJI4KHfeMBjw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.public.navy.mil%2Fairfor%2Fcvw7%2FLists%2FAnnouncements%2FAttachments%2F20%2FChanges%2520to%2520Drivers%2520License\\_Military.doc&usg=AFQjCNEKSrqNwSGA6K-iNRZS-DGqG3Ky6g](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&ved=0CEYQFjAGahUKEwiSpvW73ufHAhXPJI4KHfeMBjw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.public.navy.mil%2Fairfor%2Fcvw7%2FLists%2FAnnouncements%2FAttachments%2F20%2FChanges%2520to%2520Drivers%2520License_Military.doc&usg=AFQjCNEKSrqNwSGA6K-iNRZS-DGqG3Ky6g)