AN ACT
relating to occupational licenses for military service members, military veterans, and military spouses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Chapter 55, Occupations Code, as amended by Chapters 66 (S.B. 162) and 348 (H.B. 2254), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, is reenacted to read as follows:

CHAPTER 55. LICENSING OF MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS, MILITARY VETERANS, AND MILITARY SPOUSES

SECTION 2. Section 55.001, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Active duty" means current full-time military service in the armed forces of the United States or active duty military service as a member of the Texas military forces, as defined by Section 437.001, Government Code, or similar military service of another state.

(2) "Armed forces of the United States" means the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States or a reserve unit of one of those branches of the armed forces.

(3) "License" means a license, certificate, registration, permit, or other form of authorization required by
law or a state agency rule that must be obtained by an individual to
engage in a particular business.

(4) "Military service member" means a person
who is on active duty [currently serving in the armed forces of the
United States, in a reserve component of the armed forces of the
United States, including the National Guard, or in the state
military service of any state].

(5) "Military spouse" means a person who is
married to a military service member [who is currently on active
duty].

(6) "Military veteran" means a person who has
served on active duty and who was discharged or released from active
duty [in the army, navy, air force, marine corps, or coast guard of
the United States, or in an auxiliary service of one of those
branches of the armed forces].

(7) "State agency" means a department, board,
bureau, commission, committee, division, office, council, or
agency of the state.

SECTION 3. Section 55.002, Occupations Code, is amended to
read as follows:

Sec. 55.002. EXEMPTION FROM PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO RENEW
LICENSE. A state agency that issues a license shall adopt rules to
exempt an individual who holds a license issued by the agency from
any increased fee or other penalty imposed by the agency for failing
to renew the license in a timely manner if the individual
establishes to the satisfaction of the agency that the individual
failed to renew the license in a timely manner because the

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individual was serving as a military service member [on active duty in the United States armed forces serving outside this state].

SECTION 4. Section 55.003, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.003. EXTENSION OF LICENSE RENEWAL [CERTAIN] DEADLINES FOR [ACTIVE DUTY] MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS [PERSONNEL].

A military service member [person] who holds a license [is a member of the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, and is ordered to active duty by proper authority] is entitled to two years of [an] additional [amount of] time [equal to the total number of years or parts of years that the person serves on active duty] to complete:

(1) any continuing education requirements; and
(2) any other requirement related to the renewal of the military service member's [person's] license.

SECTION 5. Section 55.004, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.004. ALTERNATIVE LICENSING [LICENSE PROCEDURE] FOR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS, MILITARY VETERANS, AND MILITARY SPOUSES [SPOUSE]. (a) A state agency that issues a license shall adopt rules for the issuance of the license to an applicant who is a military service member, military veteran, or military spouse [the spouse of a person serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States] and:

(1) holds a current license issued by another jurisdiction [state] that has licensing requirements that are substantially equivalent to the requirements for the license in
this state; or

(2) within the five years preceding the application date held the license in this state [that expired while the applicant lived in another state for at least six months].

(b) [Rules adopted under this section must include provisions to allow alternative demonstrations of competency to meet the requirements for obtaining the license.]

[(c) The executive director of a state agency may waive any prerequisite to obtaining a license for an applicant described by Subsection (a) after reviewing the applicant's credentials [issue a license by endorsement in the same manner as the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation under Section 51.404 to an applicant described by Subsection (a)].

(c) In addition to the rules adopted under Subsection (a), a state agency that issues a license may adopt rules that would establish alternate methods for a military service member, military veteran, or military spouse to demonstrate competency to meet the requirements for obtaining the license.

SECTION 6. The heading to Section 55.005, Occupations Code, as added by Chapter 66 (S.B. 162), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.005. EXPEDITED LICENSE PROCEDURE FOR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS, MILITARY VETERANS, AND MILITARY SPOUSES.

SECTION 7. Section 55.005(a), Occupations Code, as added by Chapter 66 (S.B. 162), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, is amended to read as follows:

(a) A state agency that issues a license shall, as soon as
practicable after a military service member, military veteran, or military spouse files an application for a license:

(1) process the application; and

(2) issue the [a] license to an [a qualified military spouse] applicant who qualifies for the license under Section 55.004 [holds a current license issued by another jurisdiction that has licensing requirements that are substantially equivalent to the licensing requirements in this state].

SECTION 8. Section 55.005, Occupations Code, as added by Chapter 348 (H.B. 2254), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, is redesignated as Section 55.008, Occupations Code, and amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.008 [55.005]. APPRENTICESHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANT WITH MILITARY EXPERIENCE. (a) Notwithstanding any other law, if an apprenticeship is required for a [an occupational] license issued by a state agency, the state agency shall credit verified military service, training, or education that is relevant to the occupation toward the apprenticeship requirements for the license.

(b) The state agency shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 9. The heading to Section 55.006, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 55.006. RENEWAL OF EXPEDITED LICENSE ISSUED TO MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER, MILITARY VETERAN, OR MILITARY SPOUSE.

SECTION 10. Chapter 55, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 55.009 to read as follows:
Sec. 55.009. NOTICE OF CHAPTER PROVISIONS. A state agency that issues a license shall prominently post a notice on the home page of the agency's Internet website describing the provisions of this chapter that are available to military service members, military veterans, and military spouses.

SECTION 11. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to an application for an occupational license or renewal of an occupational license filed on or after January 1, 2016. An application for a license or for license renewal filed before January 1, 2016, is governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 12. To the extent of any conflict, this Act prevails over another Act of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

SECTION 13. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.
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President of the Senate  Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1307 passed the Senate on April 29, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

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Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1307 passed the House on May 27, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, two present not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

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Date

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Governor