

Dr. LaShae Sharp- Collins

79th Assembly District



AB 901: Military Spouse Preferential Status

SUMMARY

AB 901 will permit employers to offer hiring and promotion preferences to spouses of active-duty service members. The spouse is also eligible for additional credit for any state civil service examination.

BACKGROUND

Active-duty service members often face the challenge of frequent relocation, sometimes every two to three years, a requirement that significantly impacts their families. These frequent relocations can pose challenges for military families, including employment disruptions for spouses, educational transitions for children, and financial strains due to moving expenses.

Military spouses, 90.3% of whom are women, experience much higher unemployment rates than the general population and in 2021, the unemployment rate for civilian spouses of active-duty military members stood at 21%.¹ With each move, military spouses are forced to re-enter the job market, often facing delays due to licensing requirements, lack of local networks, and the challenge of adjusting to new job markets.

As a result, many spouses find themselves unemployed or underemployed for prolonged periods, impacting their financial security and career growth.

Several states have introduced policies to support military spouses in the workforce. For example, Maryland has implemented legislation that provides hiring preferences and additional civil service credits to military spouses.

These policies aim to reduce the barriers military spouses face and manage the challenges of frequent relocations.

California currently expedites professional licensing for military spouses in fields such as healthcare, engineering, and real estate by waiving fees and streamlining applications for those with out-of-state licenses. Adding preferential status to spouses will offer a degree of job security through constant relocation.

THIS BILL

This bill will enable employers to offer hiring and promotion preferences to spouses of active-duty service members, directly supporting and recognizing the sacrifices of military families.

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¹ USAFacts. (2024, February 9). *How many military spouses are employed by the federal government?*
[https://usafacts.org/articles/how-many-military-spouses-are-employed-by-the-federal-government/#footnote-](https://usafacts.org/articles/how-many-military-spouses-are-employed-by-the-federal-government/#footnote-1)