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March 19, 2020

Assembly member Evan Low, Chair
Assembly Committee on Business and Professions
Legislative Office Building, Room 379
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2185 (Patterson) – Occupational Licensing Portability – Support

Dear Chairman Low,

The R Street Institute is proud to be the sponsor of AB 2185 (Patterson), which will allow for the portability of occupational licenses for military spouses who move to California from other states. R Street is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy research organization that promotes free markets and limited, effective government. One of our core issues is occupational-licensing reform. We are based in Washington, D.C., and have Western offices in Sacramento.

New residents who seek an occupational license in California must meet all of the California-specific requirements, regardless of how long they've been licensed to practice in another state or the many years of successful experience they may have. California is one of only six states that do not participate in license-reciprocity agreements.

The state previously approved exemptions for military spouses in a small number of professions, but not for the vast majority of them. AB 2185 would allow all licensing entities to grant an occupational license to military spouses who are stationed in California if they have the same license from another state and meet a few reasonable qualifications.

A 2017 survey of military families from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found 44 percent of them struggling financially. Military spouse unemployment rates are at an alarming 16 percent — more than four times the national average. These troubling statistics are not surprising given the unique nature of



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military life. “The vast majority of survey respondents (90 percent) moved at least 50 miles on one or more occasions due to their spouse’s career in the military,” according to the survey. These moves often send families across state lines. It often takes months for military spouses to find gainful employment after a move, which forces military families to make ends meet on one salary.

The state ought not to impose the additional hurdle of requiring qualified military spouses to navigate the costly, time-consuming and bureaucratic process of earning a license from scratch. AB 2185 offers a simple fix that will in no way endanger public safety, but will help those who are on the front lines of the nation’s defenses avoid financial hardship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Greenhut', written over a horizontal line.

Steven Greenhut
Western Region Director
R Street Institute
(909) 260-9836