

Chairman Pilcher-Cook and members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear and consider HB2078.

As today's veterans face higher rates of unemployment than their civilian counterparts, the Department of Defense and States throughout the nation have been looking for ways to help get them back to work. HB2078 is Kansas' attempt to get our veterans with medical specialties back to work as soon as possible.

Military service members receive all types of training throughout their military careers and are also strongly encouraged to continue higher education while still serving. Soldiers are given "promotion points" for college courses and certifications and it is well known that an officer with a Masters Degree will be rated a bit higher than a counterpart without one at a promotion board. Service members also receive continual training in their specialties which often results in their actual "over qualification" when applying for civilian equivalent jobs – but they do not qualify because they do not have a certificate or diploma or license from a State agency or educational organization.

Commander Mitch Seal, from the Military Education and Training Campus in San Antonio testified before the House Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee on this issue. He not only provided information about the type of training that the military service members receive at the Military Medical School, but told his own story of having to transfer between civilian schools as his duty station was transferred and ending up with almost twice as many credits as required because of rules on accepting classes from other institutions.

The bill's intent is to ensure separating service members do not have to repeat requirements completed during their time in the service in order to obtain an equivalent license. It is not direct licensure, the licensing authority determines equivalency and tells the veteran what requirements they may still need.

The House Committee made some requested amendments to HB2078, the biggest one being the requirement for an Honorable Discharge. It passed the house 119 to 0.

Representative Melanie Meier