



**Testimony in Support, SB116**  
**Colorado House Business Affairs and Labor Committee**  
**April 5, 2022**

My name is Laura Ebke. I am a senior fellow at the Platte Institute, a public policy institute in Nebraska. I am also a former Nebraska state senator, and I write to encourage the support and advancement of SB116.

Over the last few years, states like Colorado and Nebraska have made significant steps toward improving their occupational licensing regimes. An essential part of that effort has been ensuring that our occupational licensing boards recognize the training of military personnel still active, or recently detached, who have a military occupation specialty that matches up well with occupations in the civilian world.

Mike Beyer is a young man, with a young family, in Bridgeport, Nebraska. He joined the Navy, trained to become a construction electrician, served in that role for eight years (including earning a journeyman electrician certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor for his four years of apprenticeship work). When he returned home to Bridgeport, Nebraska's licensing board told him that they'd count his training and military-based apprenticeship towards ONE YEAR of the four required before allowing him to take his Nebraska journeyman's exam. Mike's full story can be seen (in 3 ½ minutes) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ7AOuJ9STw>.

One of the arguments we see opposing recognition of licensing originating outside of our state lines and for the recognition of military occupational specialties as adequate for licensing recognition is that licensing boards don't know whether the applicants have training equivalent to the state's.

No one wants unqualified people working in occupations that could put public safety at risk. But where a military occupational specialty or outside license is in question, licensing boards can (and should) look at the scope of practice of those occupations and seek to apply them to their state's licensing framework. If an individual could do the work in the military or another state without adverse effects, they should be able to do the same job in Colorado.

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## I N S T I T U T E

April 5, 2022  
Representative Dylan Roberts  
Chairman, House Business Affairs and Labor Committee  
Colorado General Assembly

re: SB116 welcomes workers by recognizing out-of-state occupational licenses

Dear Chairman Roberts, Vice Chair Sullivan and Members of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee,

I am writing with respect to Senate Bill 116, which directs Colorado's licensing entities to grant occupational licenses to skilled professionals who have held a valid out-of-state occupational license for at least one year. This reform builds on the strong foundation of Colorado's House Bill 1326, a 2020 reform which made it easier for some groups of Americans to move into the state and get to work quickly. Senate Bill 116 expands the impact of that reform by extending its benefits to even more skilled workers.

SB 116 does not delicense any profession nor does it weaken any existing mobility agreements. Instead, it strengthens Colorado's existing pathway by requiring regulators to issue licenses to qualified workers who have met all criteria, rather than just giving them the option to do so. This change will ensure that incoming professionals have a predictable, reliable pathway to licensure in Colorado.

Senate Bill 116 protects the public in several important ways. Only those workers who have held an out-of-state license for a year or more are eligible to apply. That license must be in good standing and must have a similar scope of practice to the Colorado license being sought. In addition to these protections, workers may not have a suspended or revoked license, or have committed any act that would be grounds for discipline. Just as this pathway is not mandatory for workers, nor are regulators required to approve all licenses. Regulators retain strong discretion to deny licenses when necessary: no regulator is required to approve an applicant who does not meet the criteria or whose out-of-state license has a dissimilar scope of practice.

Importantly, SB 116 also offers licensing relief to America's veterans and service-members. By adding a Military Occupational Specialty to the list of fully qualifying licensing credentials, Colorado will signal that it respects the time, training, and experience of America's military men and women, both active duty and veterans.

In 2019, Arizona became the [first state](#) in the nation to fully recognize out-of-state occupational licenses, a reform championed by the Goldwater Institute. In the time since Arizona's law went into effect in 2019, nearly 5,000 professionals have applied for and received a license to work, in fields ranging from medicine to engineering to cosmetology to landscape architecture. Following Arizona's lead, 17 additional states have now adopted a version of recognition to benefit military families or a broader range of professionals. This session, still more states are considering legislation like SB 116.

Like Arizona, Colorado's economy benefits when employers can attract and retain skilled professionals. As America's workforce becomes increasingly mobile, professionals have more choices than ever about where they can live while pursuing their careers. By recognizing out-of-state occupational licenses, Colorado will send a strong message that it respects and values the training and experience of licensed professionals across the country, and signal that workers will find support and opportunity in the state.

With SB116, Colorado has the opportunity to build on its previous success in licensing reforms. Senate Bill 116 is a commonsense, pro-growth economic reform, and will help make the state of Colorado an even more attractive place to live and work.

Thank you,  
Heather Curry  
Director of Strategic Engagement

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