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**Testimony of
Thomas Smyth**

**Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter
Before the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, February 23, 2012, 9:00 am, Room 229**

**HB 2257 HD1 Relating to Professional and Vocational Licensing
Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi and Committee Members**

Our 400 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services strongly supports HB 2257 HD 1 which allows licensing agencies to allow demonstration of competency rather than just work experience and to expedite license issuance for military spouses.

Our position on this bill is essentially the same as that of the previous measure you heard, SB 2392. With thousands of military women and men leaving the service after many years of combat and combat support service, it is particularly important that they have the opportunity to find employment soon after they return.

As noted earlier, this is now a national issue strongly supported by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran Affairs.

As noted earlier, the American Bar Association's policy making body has just voted unanimously to reduce licensing barriers for military spouses in the legal profession. This includes "admission without examination" for qualified military spouse lawyers and to ensure that bar applications, fees and admission procedures are not unduly burdensome. These are very similar to procedures and processes supported in this bill.

If the American Bar Association can do this, surely we can in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.