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**Testimony of
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**Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter
Before the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 29, 2012, 9:00 am, Room 229**

HB 2258 HD 2 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 2258, HD 2, as amended, allowing vocational and professional licensing agencies to accept military education, training and service toward their licensing qualifications.

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 to their home state.

This issue has become a major national effort led by the First Lady and the Vice President's wife. Their effort, part of the "Joining Forces Initiative" is strongly endorsed by federal agencies, including DOD, which has testified here on this bill.

I just received an email from my national organization announcing that 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.

It would seem that if such structured licensing processes as a bar examination can be modified or expedited; agencies in Hawaii should be

able to do the same. It is not hard to accept that a Navy Construction Battalion (SEABEE) Chief Petty Officer, being discharged after many years of building facilities around the world and in the U.S., must now enter a 4000-hour construction apprenticeship program in order to become a journeyman.

There are many other examples of situations where a military person or the spouse has become fully qualified, but upon coming to Hawaii, must essentially start over. It costs them lost wages and lost opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.