



The Military Spouse JD Network (MSJDN)

An international network of legal professionals improving the lives of military families.

www.msjdn.org

We Support Military Spouses by:

- Advocating for licensing Accommodations, including Bar Membership without additional examination;
- Educating the public about the challenges facing military families;
- Encouraging employers to hire military spouses; and
- Providing a support network.

Who We Are

Over 750 Members including spouses of active-duty Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine, and Navy service-members, as well as Reserve and National Guard Spouses

The Problem: Geographic Insecurity

Military Lifestyle:

- Military Families are geographically insecure, moving every two to three years, often with tours overseas.
- These moves are based on the needs of the U.S. government, and are mandatory for the service-member. Although the spouse and children may technically refuse to move, this causes obvious hardships on families already often separated by deployments.

Legal Profession:

- Attorneys are required to be licensed in each state where they practice.
- Licensing can take up to a year, sometimes more, for the application, character and fitness review, bar examination, and processing.
- Licensing can cost \$4,000 to \$5,000 each time for preparation materials and fees.
- All gaps in employment must be justified on bar applications and can cause delays in admission.

What This Means for Our Members

- It is not unusual for our members to have taken 3 or 4 different bar examinations;
- Less than 1/3 of MSJDN members have full-time legal employment;
- Half of MSJDN members are unemployed and actively looking for work, under-employed in non-attorney positions as paralegals/secretaries, or can only find part-time work; and
- MSJDN members report that the biggest challenge to finding and keeping employment is frequent moves and lack of portable employment opportunities.

Current Status of State Rule Change Efforts

- States that have passed rule accommodations or policies: Idaho, Arizona, North Carolina, Texas
- States currently considering rule accommodations: California, Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.
- If adopted by state licensing authorities, this would allow military spouse attorneys to practice in the jurisdiction if they are in good standing in another jurisdiction and in the state due to military orders.
- We have received letters of support from the National Military Family Association, the Military Officers Association of America, and the Conference of Chief Justices. In February 2012, with the support of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, the ABA House of Delegates adopted a resolution supporting changes in state licensing rules for military spouses with law degrees.