



The Military Spouse JD Network (MSJDN)

A Bar Association for Military Spouse Attorneys

www.MSJDN.org

MSJDN Supports 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
- Providing a support network for military spouses to connect virtually and in person

Who We Are:

- An international network of military spouse attorneys, including spouses of active duty and retired Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy service-members, as well as Reserve and National Guard spouses
- Over 1,000 members and supporters, connected in person and virtually through MSJDN
- 95% of our members are women
- 80% maintain an active law license
- 75% volunteer in their local communities
- 60% have been asked about their status as a military spouse by a prospective employer
- 57% have children
- 40% have a current student loan balance of more than \$80,000
- 34% are working full time in a job requiring a law license
- 30% are seeking full time employment
- 29% could not find employment as an attorney following their last relocation

The Problem:

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:

- **Four out of five** report that their spouse's military service has negatively affected their legal career.
- **Half** have **lived apart from their spouse** in order to maintain a legal career.
- **One in five** have moved three or more times.
- **Two in five** have taken **two or more bar exams**.
- **One in four** say their student debt **load impacts their spouse's decision to stay in the military**.

Current Status of State Rule Change Efforts:

- Twelve states have military spouse attorney rules or policies: **Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia.**
- MSJDN is working on licensing accommodations in: **Alabama, Alaska, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, and Washington.**
- If adopted by state licensing authorities, the proposed MSJDN rule 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.

How Can You Support Military Spouse Attorneys?

- **Join us!** Visit www.msjdn.org to register as a member or supporter.

- **Volunteer with Justice for Military Families.** Our pro bono program, through the Military Spouse JD Foundation, provides military spouse attorneys a way to build their résumé and keep current on the law in service to their community. JMF connects military families with legal needs with pro bono legal help from MSJDN's network of military spouse attorneys.



- **Join Homefront to Hired**, an initiative through which MSJDN partners with law firms and companies committed to hiring military spouse attorneys. Partners like Lumen Legal and Attorneys in Motion commit to placing MSJDN members in available positions and supporting military spouse attorneys with their hiring practices.

HOMEFRONT
to **HIRED**

- **Become a Founding Sponsor.** Donate at one of the available levels to support MSJDN programs, while marketing your company to the military and legal community through our membership. Funds support programs like *Making the Right Moves*, an educational and networking event where members connect with each other and the local community. Making the Right Moves 2014 resulted directly in employment for MSJDN members who attended.



- **Connect with MSJDN online!** Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Check out our blog and event calendar on www.msjdn.org. Members receive access to our private forums to connect with other military spouse attorneys and receive the inside scoop on all things MSJDN.