



## MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Michigan Supreme Court Justice Brian Zahra Testifies in Support of Legislation to Help Military Spouses Practice Law**

LANSING, MI, September 8, 2016 – Michigan Supreme Court Justice Brian Zahra today testified before the House Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs in support of legislation that would help military spouses practice law in Michigan. [HB 5289](#) permits the spouse of an active military member to be admitted to the Bar without examination as long as she or he:

- Is the spouse of a member of the United States Armed Forces who is on active duty and assigned to a duty station in Michigan;
- Has passed the Bar exam and is licensed and in good standing in the Bar of another U.S. state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory;
- Meets all state requirements as to character and fitness, citizenship, age, general education, and ability;
- Has not taken and failed the examination for admission in Michigan; and,
- Is a graduate of a law school approved and accredited by the American Bar Association at the time of graduation.

The companion bill, [HB 5288](#), provides that the military spouse as qualified under the terms of this legislation remains a valid member of the bar until their spouse is no longer in military service, they are no longer married, or they have been permanently transferred.

Justice Zahra testified in his role as the Court's liaison to the state's Board of Law Examiners (BLE). In his testimony, Justice Zahra highlighted the benefits of the legislation:

“First, military families can avoid the time and expense – and stress – of multiple bar exams. Second, barriers to employment are torn down for military spouses. Third, it brings stability to military families, increasing retention of top officers and enlisted members. And fourth, it helps military families maintain a source of income. The bottom line is that it is time for Michigan to join the 18 other states that have similar licensing accommodations for military spouses.”

We can never do enough to thank the women and men who serve in America's military. But these bills are a step in the right direction to show how much we appreciate not just their service and sacrifice but also the service and sacrifice of their families—especially their spouses.”

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