



NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Minutes of the Quality of Life (QOL) Committee Meeting, 2nd Quarter, April 27, 2021
Microsoft Teams/Conference Call #: 984-204-1487 Conference ID: 188 277 18#

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kirk Warner, Chairman
Bill Hatcher
Gerald "Rudy" Rudisill
Patricia Harris
Julie Daniels

NCMAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Edward Reeder.

OTHER NCMAC MEMERS:

None

DMVA STAFF:

Ramona Robertson
Kelly Jackson
Macey Webb

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Shevelle Godwin, Fort Bragg School Support Svcs
Mark Patton, MCEC
Iris Pierce, Fort Bragg School Support Svcs
Howard Lattimore, Fort Bragg Schools
Valerie Nasser, Craven County Schools
Jamie Livengood, Wayne County Schools
Leafa Palmer School Liaison
Rollie Sampson, Moore County Schools
Brittany Norman, Onslow County Schools
Lynn Marilla, Eagle Rock Camp
Leafe Palmer, MCAS Cherry Point School Liaison
Adam Lindsey, City of Fayetteville
Cristy Barnes-Williams, Seymour Johnson AFB Liaison
Kevin Bruch
Ron Massey, City of Jacksonville
Doug Taggart, DPI
Debra Bryant
Max Dolan
John Bigger, Cape Fear Medical Center
LTC David Walliser, NCNG

OPENING REMARKS: CHAIRMAN KIRK WARNER

Chairman Kirk Warner called the meeting to order at 10:01 and welcomed everyone to the Quality of Life meeting. He conducted a roll call of the attendees. He had a quorum of voting members. He said that it looked like we had a lot of people attending the meeting today. Chairman Warner said that he wanted to do the ethics requirement. He said that we have a legal obligation to disclose any conflict of interests that may or may not arise or potentially arise with your regular job or any of your business of the Quality of Life committee. If you have a potential conflict, he asks that you disclose that potential conflict, so we are aware of the potential conflict. Does anyone have such a conflict? Does anyone have any potential conflict of interest with the business on the agenda and if not, please be cognizant of any potential conflicts that arise from the discussion topics and govern yourself accordingly.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Warner said that the committee had a quorum and would approve the 1st Quarter draft Quality of Life minutes from January 26, 2021, from the voting members. Patricia Harris made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Bill Hatcher and passed by a unanimous vote.

DOROTHEA DIX CARE UNIT FOR ADOLESCENTS AT THE BETSY JOHNSON HOSPITAL: JOHN BIGGER

Chairman Warner introduced John Bigger from the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. We have been working with John Biggers for the last five years about an adolescent psychiatric unit for military children. He has asked John Bigger to give us an update on their progress. John Bigger said that it was hard to believe it had been five years. He has several updates to share with the committee. The first and biggest update is that the Dorothea Dix Care Unit is undergoing construction as we speak. The biggest change for this is that we were able to find space at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in Fayetteville which is closer to Fort Bragg. We will have a 16-Bed In-patient psychiatric adolescent unit that will open in late September or early October of 2021. It is a great design and next door to the adult psychiatric unit. So, it will be easy access for all parties. We have group therapy rooms, quiet activity rooms, dining room, and sixteen beds that are all semi-private. There are eight rooms, and each bedroom has a corridor door that can be closed at night, and we can separate males and females. This will be good for security. They have secured the funding for all of the construction. They received \$4 M from the State of North Carolina from the Dorothea Dix Fund. One of the challenges that they do have is that they are about \$200K short in terms of furnishing. They are trying to get some upgrades to prevent violence and injuries. They are looking for regular size chairs, but they are filled with sand. It prevents anyone from picking up a chair and throwing it. They are looking at ways to get their budget increased. They are looking at naming rights for a certain size donations. Another area that can have naming rights is the outside area. That is a quick overview, and they continue to partner with Dr. John Lesica who is the Chief Psychiatrist at Womack Army Medical Center. He has been a great partner with this project. Chairman Warner asked if they had out- patient services or is it only for in-patient care. John Bigger said that it was only in-patient care, but they have four board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist that do provide out-patient services. The plan it that they could go to this facility and be referred to the out-patient area. Chairman Warner asked if the facility that was planned for Betsy Johnson Hospital was just moved to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center? John Bigger said that was correct. This change to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center allows us to have everything self-contained in its own building away from any medical concerns. Chairman Warner said that this was a win-win project. John Biggers said that they would conduct all of the hiring for positions in late July and orientation in August. Then they will be onsite and ready when the unit opens in August/September timeframe. Chairman Warner said that this was great news for the Fort Bragg community and the State of North Carolina. Rollie Sampson said that she was very excited about this as she is in Moore County. She said that she has a large number of students that are referred to Barry Robinson, so having something closer would be a good thing for them. She wanted to know if some of the consideration for placement for LGBTQ military students is something they are looking at for this unit? John Bigger said that there is no differential between who they can or cannot accept. If they meet the diagnostic criteria for in-patient psychiatric admission they will be processed. Chairman Warner thanked John Bigger for his continued support of this project, and he looked forward to seeing the finished product.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Kelly Jackson introduced Ramona Robertson, new Service Member and Family Coordinator. Ramona Robertson said that she was the new Service Member and Family Coordinator. She wanted to let everyone know about the project that she is working on. She has put together a Virtual Roundtable discussion referencing Sexual Assault and Harassment. The Virtual Roundtable will be held tomorrow from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. The Roundtable will be a meet and greet so that Secretary Gaskin can

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become familiar with the Installation Sexual Assault Advocates and Coordinators. Also, to discuss resources that the State has available. She is looking forward to working with this committee. She served in the military on Active Duty, Reserves, and the National Guard where she retired. She served as an Equal Opportunity coordinator and also with the National Guard Family Programs. She is ready for this new task and working with everyone. Chairman Warner welcomed her to the Committee. Kelly Jackson also introduced another new member from the National Guard. LTC David Walliser said that he was the Director of the Solider Support Services in the G-1 Section for the National Guard. He has responsibility over fourteen programs and some of them will be talked about today at this meeting. He is looking forward to being part of this committee. Kelly Jackson reminded everyone that Alice Dean, NC National Guard, who had been a member of this committee for many years, had recently retired. The Committee will miss her and her contributions to this committee. Lynn Marilla introduced herself. She said that she is the founder and president of Eagle Rock Camp. They are a family saving suicide prevention organization that works with active duty, veterans and National Guard and Reserves. They conduct therapeutic retreats that do a deep dive into moral and spiritual healing, which is part of Post-Traumatic Stress. We use a strong component of faith, so we minister spiritually and prayerfully with permission only. We know that our program works, and she is here to get the word out. They have a wait list of over 800 families, and they run about 50% active duty.

INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN: NICK SOJAK

Jamie Livengood said that several of the committee members attended the Interstate Compact meeting. She thought that it was a productive meeting. A couple of the items that we talked about at the meeting, we have talked about at QOL meetings before. We have talked about the Interstate Compact not having a reference point or anything in the North Carolina Board of Education's Graduation policy. Because there are provisions and pieces of the Compact that directly deal with the graduation requirements, they have talked about the need for language about the Compact's existence in the graduation policy. She thinks they made some headway with this topic yesterday at the meeting. Jamie Livengood said that Nick Sjoka was very in tune to what is happening, and he plans to take this issue and handle it. That will be a good win. There was a great presentation on the Purple Star Program and the impact that it seems to be having not only on the great things that schools are doing but an increase and training level of the schools so far that have done it. That ties into the conversation that they had yesterday that we need more training on the Interstate Compact and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). So, Doug Taggart was able to have the National Office do a presentation on training options, and we will continue that discussion on where that will go. She said that as all of us know that the awareness level is a big part of what we want to do because in following the Compact and you are not aware of what it offers students, it will not be maximized for our State. Another big topic was athletics and trying to make headway with the NC High School Athletic Association. We want them to have an awareness of the Compact. That was another big topic. We also discussed legislation and grievance procedures which Nick Sjoka brought up and policies. Since Nick Sojka is also a lawyer, he has an eye for where we might need to put language and how it might need to be inserted. We want to ensure that policies are in place and also that awareness levels are all around.

Rollie Sampson said that there was also a big emphasis on the State Level Military Liaison at the Department of Public Instruction. Many of the issues that we talked about at the Interstate Compact meeting could have been addressed by the person in that position. We looked at opportunities to show

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support and that the NC Military Affairs Commission had signed a letter of support. Also, to look at those states that currently have that position as a best practice. Using those States as an example and the standard. It is great that we have 4 state funded positions but for the other school districts like Moore County, which is funded by Impact Aid. Her position is now in jeopardy because it is a local decision. So, the state level position will ensure that all school districts will have some type of support. Chairman Warner asked Doug Taggart if he knew what the status was of the State-Level position? When he last talked to the Superintendent Catherine Truitt, that was certainly part of the budget request. Doug Taggart said that the position has not been put back into the budget for a few years and he does not think that it was in the current budget request. Chairman Warner asked that Kelly Jackson check on that item. Kelly Jackson said that the last Resolution of Support that was approved by the Commission was in 2018. She said that Secretary Gaskin supports the State Level Military Liaison position at DPI, and he mentioned this to Superintendent Truitt when he had his meeting with her. Chairman Warner said that the position was not being resisted but limited funds. We need to help with that if we can. We have been looking at this for quite a while.

Howard Lattimore asked if Jamie Livengood had gone over transitioning for remote learning and if she had not could she cover that. Jamie Livengood said that with Covid implications, there has been a domino effect. The Permanent Change of Station (PCS) issue has caused a lot of issues. Since we have remote learning going on, now the questions from parents are if my child is remote and attending school virtually, and we are moving, can my child continue to learn remote with your school? We are seeing different situations and have to handle them on a case by case basis. There are various issues that arise since we have a State Statue that states, resident or domicile which can complicate things. Doug Taggart said that we have a local controlled State, so unless there is something explicit in law or policy around allowing a student to continue, it will be up to the individual school system to decide how that will be handled. Jamie Livengood said that the biggest thing is that we are trying to work those issues as best they can, and even among those of us here today, that are in these various school districts, could not give a certain answer across the board if you gave me ten families because every situation is different. This presents us with opportunities to help in whatever way that we can. Focusing on what is best for the student. Valerie Nasser said that she thinks that the military families like having that virtual option so if they are moving now, during the first week in May and we finish the last week of May, they do not have to start a new school for three weeks since they are moving. This offers them a lot of opportunities going both directions. However, Dr. Doyle said at a meeting that the State Board of Education is considering eliminating all virtual options from Local Education Activity (LEA) and having the five remote learning days. That may not be available to our military families moving forward. Doug Taggart said that the big advantage to allowing them to continue virtually during a transition is the continuity of education during that transition period. So, this will eliminate having a student out of school for four weeks while they are moving, and they can continue their education and be less impacted. That is the real advantage of this program. Chairman Warner asked how we tackle that since this seems to be a unique circumstance for transitioning military children. Valerie Nasser said that she is not aware of the discussion at the State level, so she does not have an answer to the question. She knows that Onslow County has their own Virtual school which she assumes will be allowed to continue after this. Also North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) is also an option. They have been working closely with military families when they had odd cases. Doug Taggart said that the next step on this would be to involve the NC Virtual Public Schools to present at the next QOL meeting and talk about

how the partnerships are with the school systems work and what their limitations are. That could help to frame things better for everyone. Rollie Sampson said that there is one challenge that no one has talked about. That is State required testing. The End of Grade and End of Course testing is required to be done in person in the State of North Carolina. If she has a student that moves to Germany, she is not allowed to have the receiving area conduct the test. Even if she gets the receiving school to allow that student to finish with their North Carolina school and done in person. We are all playing work arounds. This can affect the school report card. She has a student, and the plan will be that she will complete all of the work through the end of the year, then she will withdraw before the testing window. Then we can administer the end of year grades and promote her. The Department of the Defense Schools are not being helpful in this process either. Jamie Livengood said that it does take a lot of case work and then goes back to needing a State Level Military Liaison at DPI. From that top view you may be able to get some pieces that will help the local school districts to navigate those issues. Shevelle Godwin said that the State Level position can also help with the Athletics issues. Chairman Warner said that if we need to reach out to the NC High School Athletic Association, he has some connections from being a 30 year official. Doug Taggart said that Dr. Doyle has some contact with the Athletics Association and that could be the angle and get by in from that Association. Doug Taggart said that getting back to the virtual public schools' issue there are couple different issues. The remote enrollment during a transition out and the athletics coming in. Chairman Warner said that we need to crack the code on this.

K-12 AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (DPI) UPDATES/ISSUES:

Purple Star Program: Valerie Nasser said that we had the State Awards for the Purple Star Program. There were 288 schools awarded and almost double from last year. The spread is moving away from just the LEAs and near installations. Hopefully more good news for the future. The Purple Star Programs is getting a National push as those score cards come out. We are glad to be a head of the game and largely to the work of the QOL committee that we were ready and prepared to jump right into this program. She knows that the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is pushing the Purple Star program for support across the county. She also said that Howard Lattimore has all of his schools in Cumberland County receiving the award. Gerald Rudisill asked if there were any National Guard or Reserve units involved in this? Chairman Warner said that the National Guard had a lot of indirect interest in the schools that were awarded and involved. Valerie Nasser said that goes back to the State Level Liaison that could help with the reach for that. Doug Taggart said that the National Guard and Reserve are not directly involved it is the schools that apply.

Delayed PCS: Chairman Warner asked about PCS moves and are they getting back on track? Rollie Sampson said that she is not sure how the new year for PCS will go but they are still dealing with the fallout from last year and so many late enrollments in April and May. That 90 day cycle is still off. She is hoping to see an adjustment over the summer. So, for her and her school district they are still feeling the impact of the stop movement. Chairman Warner asked if there are any other issues due to the stop movement order that we have not discussed at a previous meeting? No further comments.

Military School Liaison (MLO)/School Liaison Officer (SLO) UPDATES:

Craven County: Valerie Nasser said that she did not have anything new to bring to the committee. They are still encouraging for calendar flexibility for her districts that are home to installations. The point of

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that is to allow the semesters to end at Christmas or in line with Community calendars. As our military students transfer. That is always on the radar.

Fort Bragg: Iris Pierce said that she wanted to share with the committee that Fort Bragg is doing a virtual Pre-K and Kindergarten information session with families that are transitioning into Kindergarten or they are transitioning into another Installation. This will be a big event and they have 43 parents signed up so far for the event. This will be on May 1, and they will be talking about transition services and how they can assist them. They will also be talking about the Interstate Compact. We are sharing the information about the information session through Fort Bragg's Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) and Cumberland County Public Library website. Shevelle Godwin said that Child and Youth Services (CYS) will be having Summer Camps this Summer. They are working to ensure that families are aware they are opening back up. They are conducting their community exchange information briefing and we want our families to be involved this summer for children Kindergarten to 12th grade. We want our families to be informed and involved. Iris Pierce said that Gerhard Guevara conducts the Master Resiliency Program which connects our youth all over the world to a matching system so we know what youth will be coming to Fort Bragg. He conducts a two week program to get them integrated into the schools and this has been conducted for a couple of years. Shevelle Godwin said that as MLOs and SLOs they have to work together. She knows that all of them have Student to Student programs and have to work together to ensure that their Ambassador programs are successful. It is important to all of us that our students have a smooth transition into our schools and someone from their class to help them with the transition.

Chairman Warner said that he appreciated the cooperation from all of the MLOs and SLOs to ensure that the students and families are taking care of and served. Well done by all of these dedicated Counselors. Chairman Warner said that he wanted to hear from Seymour Johnson and Wayne County. They were the center of attention at the last Commission meeting, and he asked if there are any updates for the committee. Cristy Barnes-Williams said that they received the Letter to Proceed with the public school on the installation. So, they are proceeding with that process and working with Wayne County Schools to get a lease drafted and sent to the lawyers to be signed. This is happening. We have talked about the curriculum and what that will look like going forward for the 6-12 grades. Jamie Livengood said this will be staggered and have 6th, 9th and 10th graders and selection will be done through a lottery. The goal will be to have 50% community students and 50% military students. More to come and they will keep the committee updated. Cristy Barnes-Williams said that with Summer school happening, they do have a large Faith-Based group community leaders and as well as other agencies trying to pull together a secondary type of Summer School. There will be the one conducted by the public school system and this other one will be for those students who do not get accepted to the public school summer school due to limited space. They are working on additional Summer School support by community leadership.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (DPI): DOUG TAGGART

Chairman Warner said that he wanted to let the committee members know that he attended a meeting about Troops to Teachers that was attended by staff members for Senator Burr and Tillis. They talked about ways to try to carve out North Carolina's Troops to Teachers. That is still in work in progress, but the train is quickly moving. They had a good discussion with those staff members and there continues

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to be hope. Doug Taggart said that he wanted to thank Chairman Warner and Rep Grier Martin for their efforts and the help of the DMVA. It is official as of March that Department of Defense (DoD) has sunset the program and retroactive to October. The States that currently have grants will close out their third grant year and that can be between May and June 2021. For North Carolina that will be May 14, 2021. There was an extension that the leadership from DPI took to continue us to complete closeout operations. So, there will be a Reduction in Force (RIF) on June 30, 2021. The military student identifier date as far as he knows and something that has not been resolved is who will be taking on the duties that he had for DPI. He thinks that in the last month some decisions will be made about that. The one decision that has been made is that Dr. Angie Mullennix is the Superintendent designee for the State Council for the MIC3. So, that will fall to her. The other parts of the job have not been decided yet such as who will attend the QOL of meetings. As he gets more information on this he will send an email to Kelly Jackson with that information. The military student identifier update, he wants to mention that normally he sends a memo out in August that has military related items to the school systems through the Superintendent's office. He does this memo annually and the military student identifier is part of that memo. So, that is up in the air until he has who the point of contact will be going forward That information should be available in January each year. Chairman Warner thanked Doug Taggart for all that he has done for the QOL committee and for military students and families for many years. He is a great advocate.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Chairman Warner said that Kelly Jackson had sent out a couple legislative items. There are four that we are tracking right now. Kelly Jackson said that House Bill 53 is now Session Law 2021-9 and House Bill 76 was brought to her attention from Camp Lejeune. The NC Commander's Council sent a letter to Secretary Gaskin, and he endorsed their letter and that was sent to members of the General Assembly. Chairman Warner said that another bill that the Commission continues to look at is on Tax Exemption for military pay, House Bill 83. He asked of anyone had any other legislation? Macey Webb said that she and Secretary Gaskin met with Representative Szoka about House Bill 83. She wanted to give an update on this bill. They thought it was going to move forward as it got a favorable report. It was supposed to go to the floor for the 2nd and 3rd reading and then sent to the Senate. Due to a Representative that had some concerns with it, some of the key supporters changed their vote on it, which made the bill revert back to the rules committee. That is where it currently sits now.

Session Law 2021-9/House Bill 53:

An Act to authorize student attendance in a local school administrative unit for children of active duty military due to the military orders of the parent and to clarify continuous enrollment for high school students who are dependents of military personnel once those students are admitted to a state institution of higher education.

Senate Bill 629: Military Spouse Appreciation Day

An Act Designating Military Spouse Appreciation Day in North Carolina

House Bill 76: Modernize Debt Settlement Prohibition

An act to modernize and expand the prohibition of debt settlement by making debt settlement

an unfair trade practice, clarifying the definition of debt settlement, expanding civil remedies available to debtors, and limiting debt settlement acts that are authorized and to make other administrative and technical changes.

House Bill 552: Remote License Conversion for Military

An Act Directing the Division of Motor Vehicles to Offer Remote Conversion of Full Provisional Licenses to persons deployed out of state as a member of the armed forces of the United States.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Warner said that the Roundtable on Sexual Assault is new business. He asked if there was any other information to add to that? Kelly Jackson said that Roundtable is tomorrow, and they are looking forward to this meet and greet and the great discussion that we will have. There are many good topics that will be discussed, and this Roundtable is important to Secretary Gaskin. Chairman Warner said that the Roundtable is tomorrow, Wednesday April 14, 10 am - 12 pm.

Chairman Warner talked about the Score Card. At a previous Executive Steering Group meeting, they had talked about the score card and the QOL committee was asked to look into this matter. He is not sure how to tackle this and hopefully there will be an update in 2020. Whether the data is bona fide or not, it will be as good as it can be done. There are a lot of subjective aspects about this. One size does not fit all. You could potentially have all green but if you are just comparing against other bases then there will always be 1/3 red, 1/3 yellow and 1/3 green. The data can cross over jurisdictions and zip codes. We need to try to get our arms wrapped around this. You could be good and still in the red. Next to mission and infrastructure this is probably the next biggest factor. The score card is education and that is why we are going to focus on this. We need to look at these and see how we can address them. He said that Jamie Livengood has done a deep dive into this matter. Jamie Livengood said that she has done a lot of digging into this data. The score card on the public education side would not change this upcoming year because the Department of Education (DOE) data that was used has not been updated due to Covid and other things. DOE delayed that submission. She will try to find out if they have had a recent submission because she thinks it could be another cycle before we see any changes. The other piece that she would highlight as well as knowing that the score cards were coming, we did not know how they would capture the catchment area. With everything they have done, they have tried to use data that is accessible to anyone of them. You can look up this information or google this information. With that catchment area, that was a surprise for them and other service branches if they do that. The catchment area was selected based on how the basic housing allowance is calculated. A point of note and she would advocate to look at the catchment area differently. When we get the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) data, that shows us military population across the state of North Carolina. The catchment area for Seymour Johnson there are two of those counties where one of the counties had seven military students living in their districts and in the other county had 40 military students. That poses the question, should they be part of the catchment area. That is just another side note. On the quality of life pieces that they could work on are some legislative items. What is our Pre-Kindergarten availability? How do we move that needle? Are there things that we could take from

yellow to the green and move that needle. She thinks that is what Kirk Warner's thoughts are. On the licensure side, we have made a lot of progress but what is the language that is missing on our end that makes it yellow and not green like South Carolina? In her data dive and she is not a researcher, she looked at Combat Command bases, which is what Seymour Johnson Air Force Base is in. She looked at that framework and who is green and what are their pieces. How does this line up? She definitely observed and noted that those student learning rates, the ones with a higher student learning rate had a much higher socioeconomic status in their area. That is just an observation. The other piece that goes along with that is that she even looked at funding per-pupil in education. When she saw green, she saw higher levels of per-pupils funding. That is something that we can take a look at. This may give us information to inform the conversation on where we would take advocacy efforts with legislators. Those are her observations. Chairman Warner said that those are some great observations and information that could be very helpful.

Rollie Sampson said that she has gotten very involved in the licensure issues. Being a military spouse, she has kept track of what has been going on. She knows that DPI has been looking at their processes because it is not easy to transfer your license to the State of North Carolina. As staff and part of their forum, their military spouses sat down and made some very specific recommendations that they will be forwarding to DPI and the challenges that they experienced. Then compared them to other States which are more streamlined in that process. So, on the flip side she is very involved with the American Counseling Association. They have a military and government association. The North Carolina chapter has taken on licensure for Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors. It is difficult for Licensed Clinical Social Workers to transfer their license to the State of North Carolina. We are talking about behavioral health needs, and we cannot even serve the population. This could be something that we may want to have someone talk about and the roadblocks they are running into. She thinks the intent is there and that we want to make that transition easier but what we are really seeing is that North Carolina is quick to give a temporary license. but they are not necessarily accepting all of the training. So, the teachers are having to retest and take more classes. There is nationally a movement from the National Counseling Association, and they are working on a state compact. She thinks that North Carolina is considering this but has yet to sign on where other surrounding states have done so. What that would mean is that if she has a license in the State of Georgia, and then she moves to North Carolina and they are part of that compact, they will accept your license without her having to go through that entire process, not just applying but having to show all of your supervision which is costly. We can keep you up to date on where the licensure issues are going. The DoD has focusing on licensure, Military Officer Association of America (MOAA) and National Military Family Association because spouse employment is one of the number one issues. K-12 education is still number three. Doug Taggart said that another thing that he was involved in was NC Strives. They do some work for teacher recruitment. He will forward her that information as something she may want to get involved in going forward.

Chairman Warner said that this is an issue that he would like to see Jamie Livengood, and others to put a list together of how we can move the needle to green. These are items that the legislature should be all about. We just need to make things easier for teachers or everyone moving to try to streamline the processes. Hopefully if it is legislation it would bi-partisan and not a big deal. So, if we can get a list together, that would be very helpful. If we are red, that could be problematic if a BRAC is coming our way.

NEW TOPICS:

Chairman Warner said that the slides provided by Patricia Harris had been sent to all of the Quality of Life committee members. He asked Patricia Harris to give a quick three ups and three downs for the members. He also said that in Texas and DoD they had been focused on this. In Texas, there is a state law that is working through bi-partisan channels for a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator outside the chain of command and outside of the gates that could be the responsible person that you could report matters to. That is similar to what Patricia Harris is doing. It is a state law. He is not sure what DoD's position is going to be on this because it could pick away at Command Discipline. That could be good and there could be second order effects on this. Texas has introduced this legislation. This is in memory of SPC Guillen. Chairman Grier Martin has been looking at this as well. We need to get more information and the impact on this going forward. Patricia Harris said that April is a very special month, as it is Sexual Assault Awareness month. As we know, there was a Commission that was formed through the Pentagon headed by Leon Rosenthal. She was not surprised by one of the recommendations that the Commission made, to take the decision to prosecute cases of sexual assault out of the military chain of command. If and a huge if, the initial recommendation is made by the Commission and accepted by the Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, that would be a major change by the military. That decision would be one to watch as it could look at the separation of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's military career and time as a civilian. We know that was a concern when he was seeking his waiver that he did secure and the confirmation he sought. History is for advocates, as it is now, and law makers have been calling for the military commanders to be taken out of the decision making process when it comes to prosecuting sexual assault cases. Arguing that they are inclined to overlook the issue. We know that this is not new. It was last suggested in 2013. One of the big issues about it now is that you have some of the law makers such as Senator Gillibrand said that back in 2013 when the military commanders were asked about taking a more serious look at this and what about looking at outside justice, for these cases of sexual assault and harassment, they said we have it. Her words and she is quoting. "You don't have it, because we still have the problem". The sources tell her, that currently no decision from Secretary Austin has been made. We believe that he will consult the leadership of the Branches before making that decision. The Services are scheduled to provide their assessment and feedback by the end of May. Sexual Assault in the United States Military is largely under reported and it has come under renewed scrutiny recently. Much of this support about taking this out of the hands of the Chain of Command has been because of the Me Too movement and the investigation panel that looked into the valid crimes at Fort Hood. They found that the Command Structure was permissive of sexual assaults. Even here in North Carolina some of the victims are not trusting. The NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CASA) legislative agenda and there are six of them. One of their concerns is nurses and they are looking at proposed legislation and language for audit of the hospitals. Targeting how many trained nurses or trauma informed staff do they have to conduct rape kits. We have learned that in North Carolina that this is still a big concern. Another is about survivor identity and that speaks for itself. It gives the survivor the right to have their identity disclosed. Also, the anti-slap legislation. This is when the survivor of sexual assault come forward on social media or disclosing their assault and the perpetrators have used the court system to file defamation lawsuits to silence the survivor. Have seen an uptick of that here in this State. This legislation would seek an early dismissal for those suits and also require the perpetrator if he/she loses to pay the court costs for the survivors and that would be great too. Lastly she is very excited to know that DMVA has taken the lead in what was started and keeping these and other concerns of domestic violence and sexual assault as a part of the Quality of Life committee as it

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does relate to readiness. Chairman Warner said that she had touch on a lot of items. In the Texas legislation they recognize that soldiers needed a way to report because they were afraid to move it up the Chain of Command and the impact on their careers. This outside reporting that would be done by the Texas Rangers. The most important thing is to encourage reporting and not have to push it up the chain of command.

Chairman Warner talked about what do we want to take to the Executive Steering Group for the Commission meeting? Maybe we need to talk about the score card and what it is all about. Another item could be an update from John Bigger on the Dorothea Dix Care Unit.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Warner asked if there were any public comments from anyone attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Warner adjourned the meeting at 11:55 pm.