

## **Enlisted Association of the Arkansas National Guard (EAANG) Resolution**

### **AR 15 – 03**

**TITLE:** Arkansas Military Spouse Preference (MSP) in hiring.

**SHORT DESCRIPTION:** Call upon the State of Arkansas to establish a Military Spouse Preference (MSP) program for filling vacancies in State government and establishing that use of an equivalent system by local public agencies and private businesses is encouraged.

**PROPOSAL TYPE:** New Submission

**SUBMITTER:** SFC James H. Howard

**BUSINESS CASE:** Military Spouse Preference (MSP) in hiring exists within the Federal Government however Arkansas does not have a similar program for hiring in State Government. Arkansas Code Annotated 21-3-302, Veterans Preference Law, allows instances in which an unmarried surviving spouse of a deceased veteran is entitled to 5 point preference (21-3-302(c)) and further instances in which the spouse of a veteran whose disability disqualifies them from appointment may receive increased 10 point preference (21-3-302(d)(3)). Military spouses make unique sacrifices in supporting their Service member, including routinely being uprooted by military directed moves to new duty stations. These military moves are stressful times for military families and are compounded by military spouses often having to search for employment. The current Federal MSP program only provides a hiring preference within Federal Agencies and is based upon a confusing patchwork of Federal laws, and executive orders.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Enlisted Association of the Arkansas National Guard urges the Governor and Arkansas Legislature to establish an Arkansas Military Spouse Preference (MSP) Program with broad yet specific guidance regarding the eligibility and application of MSP in hiring for vacancies within State Agencies and encouraging usage of similar programs by local agencies and private businesses. EAANG recommends the inclusion of all spouses of currently serving military personnel in the MSP Program to be established, as well as continued eligibility of surviving spouses and spouses already mentioned in A.C.A. 21-3-302. EAANG suggests a category of MSP similar to the current 5 point Veteran Preference by which military spouses are awarded a number of points lesser than eligible Veterans and ranked on selection lists immediately subsequent to Veteran Preference eligible applicants and ahead of non-Veteran applicants. EAANG also recommends amending Arkansas Code Title 11, Chapter 15, Voluntary Veterans' Preference Employment Policy, to include Military Spouse Preference Programs.