



REMARKS BY SECRETARY EUGENE SCALIA
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY SPOUSES
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As Prepared For Delivery



Thank you for that introduction, Captain Weiss. And thank you all for being here. I'm very pleased to be traveling with Second Lady Karen Pence, a tireless advocate for members of the military and their families.

One of the most important days for my understanding of our military was the day my brother Matthew married his wife Michelle. Matt is in the Army; right now he's Garrison Commander at Fort Benning. He and Michelle were married at West Point. I'll never forget how, as my wife and I drove onto the grounds at West Point and toward the Chapel that day, we passed a cemetery where hundreds of West Point graduates lie. At that moment I thought of Michelle, and what she was marrying into; on this happiest of days, the cemetery was a reminder that she was joining Matt in a commitment that could call for the greatest sacrifice. It was no ordinary bond they would share.

The men and women who serve in the armed forces make many sacrifices. So do their spouses and families. We're here today because, while we can't remove all that sacrifice, there are things we can do to ease the burden. And those are things we should do.

Our military is global, nimble, and ready for any challenge. But maintaining that posture frequently requires personnel and their families to move to new locations. As you know, members of the military are transferred every two and a half years, on average. And when a member of the military is transferred, that sailor, soldier, Marine or airman's family often faces the choice between moving with the service member or staying put. Military spouses are seven times more likely to move across state lines than the non-military working population. And unemployment among military spouses is often 3 to 4 times higher than the national average—3 to 4 times higher. Finding a new job can be challenging for anyone, but the military spouse who has a mobile work history knows that finding a new job, in a new location, for a short stay, can be triply hard.

The program we're announcing today will help with this. We're calling it "Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses," or TEAMS. TEAMS will help military spouses navigate the job market, get their credentials recognized across state lines, improve resumes, and market their skills and talents more successfully.

We created the program because we heard military spouses wanted it: 44% of military spouses report wanting to attend the "Transition Assistance Program," or TAP workshops aimed at transitioning service members, but only 7% report

actually attending. The TEAMS program is designed specifically for military spouses and will be delivered at times and in ways that are more convenient for them.

The new program starts this afternoon, here at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. Today's segment is called "Marketing Me: A Job Search Approach." Participants will discuss strategies for networking, will develop their "elevator pitch" about their skills, and will learn how to use the networking platform "LinkedIn" to better market themselves.

The feedback we get from today's segment and other demonstrations we're doing will help us deploy these workshops more broadly in 2021.

Let me mention another issue the Trump Administration is tackling to help military spouses. Many jobs today require an occupational license issued by the State. But those licenses often aren't recognized once you cross state lines. A talented optician or teacher in Georgia isn't any less capable if she moves to Florida—but without an occupational license to work in Florida, she can't practice her profession in the State.

President Trump and Vice President Pence have made reform of occupational licensing a priority. The Vice President leads the Governors' Initiative on Regulatory Innovation, which brings together governors and state legislators from across the country to discuss reducing barriers to economic growth and job creation. A key focus for them has been removing these occupational licensing barriers, especially for military spouses. The Second Lady has been a strong and persistent advocate for these changes.

A number of States have already acted: Just this year, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio all implemented major reforms. And here in Florida, state agencies must now issue occupational licenses to military spouses who hold out-of-state licenses—and the State waives their application fees. Thank you, Governor DeSantis. Let's see more States follow your lead.

The Labor Department will continue to work with States as they consider ways to modify their licensing statutes. And we've created a web portal that provides resources for military spouses navigating licensing laws; it includes a map that shows the licensing requirements in each State. The website is veterans.gov/MilSpouses. Our goal is for military spouses—and others who hold

valid occupational licenses—to be free to move about the country to use their talents and skills in their chosen occupation.

The efforts I've described are part of something larger: They're part of the Administration's commitment to rebuild our nation's military and to support men and women who serve. We're doing that through pay raises for our troops, investments in modern military equipment, reforms to the VA system, and expanded economic opportunities for veterans. We built an extraordinary economy in the first three years of this Administration—7 million jobs, and an unemployment rate that hit a 50-year low. Now, we're in the process of building that economy a second time—we've added back 10.6 million jobs in four months, far faster than anyone predicted. We want our veterans and military spouses to share in that vibrant, inclusive economy.

Before I close, I'd like to recognize again the efforts of someone we'll hear from shortly. Second Lady Karen Pence has traveled the nation and met with thousands of military spouses in order to draw attention to the challenges faced by military families. I'm grateful for her work to ensure that families serving our nation have fuller access to all the economic opportunities this country provides.

It's now my privilege to welcome Laura Pottenburgh. Laura is the wife of Captain Matt Pottenburgh; she's the mother of four, a business professional, and a volunteer. Thank you, Laura, for the sacrifices you and your family make to serve our country.