



Document No. 07-51

For more information,
(703) 588-0948

Arkansas to Provide Employment Support for Military Spouses

WASHINGTON, May 3, 2007 – Arkansas became the 15th state to provide specific eligibility for unemployment compensation for a military spouse who must terminate employment due to a military-required relocation of his or her family.

Governor Mike Beebe signed Senate Bill 773 into law in a special ceremony with Leslye Arsht, deputy under secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy. The new law assures that military spouses won't be disqualified for unemployment benefit payments in Arkansas if he or she leaves their place of employment to move with a military spouse to a new duty station. In the past, military spouses may have been ruled ineligible to receive unemployment compensation when forced to relocate as a result of military orders.

Ms. Arsht congratulated Governor Beebe, bill sponsors, and dignitaries gathered at the state capitol.

"This monetary bridge, when necessary, is important for sustaining family income while adjusting to the continual stress of relocation," she said.

The Defense Department has identified a number of priority policy areas where states can take action to impact military quality of life, particularly family issues. Prior to the ceremony, Arsht met with Beebe, his senior staff, and Arkansas's Adjutant General, Major General William Wofford. They discussed several key issues, including in-state tuition for military dependents, spouse employment, accessibility by military spouses to state Workforce Investment Act training funds, and programs and policies to care for the needs of the Guard and Reserve components and their families. Arsht also met with Brig. Gen. Kip Self, Wing Commander at Little Rock Air Force Base, to discuss military child education, and to tour county school facilities located on the installation.

Arkansas's legislative action continues the growing trend by states to support military families. The state of Montana also approved similar unemployment insurance eligibility for military spouses during this year's legislative session. Sponsored by State Representative Jim Keane of Butte, and signed by Governor Brian Schweitzer, House Bill 58 will take effect October 1, 2007. Similar legislation is under consideration in South Carolina, New Jersey, and Connecticut.