NORWOOD – Monday, March 18, 2013 – Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today announced that all state agencies that oversee professional licensing within the Patrick-Murray Administration have established guidelines to assist members of the armed forces, veterans and their spouses as they prepare and apply for jobs in Massachusetts.

The announcement is a follow up to the authorization and implementation of “An Act Relative to Veterans’ Access, Livelihood, Opportunity, and Resources” (VALOR Act), signed by Governor Deval Patrick in 2012, which required certain areas of state government to establish military friendly practices for licensing. The Patrick-Murray Administration then expanded this action to reach all relevant agencies within the
Executive Branch. This component of the VALOR Act was inspired by a request from First Lady Michelle Obama and the Joining Forces Initiative to ensure that those who have served in the military have a streamlined and efficient process through which to obtain appropriate licensure for jobs when they are home.

“As our military servicemen and women sacrifice their lives for our country they also gain tremendous and unique job training skills that should never be overlooked when seeking employment,” said Lieutenant Governor Murray, Chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Veterans’ Services. “Massachusetts is already a national leader in providing services for our veterans so it was only natural to answer First Lady Michelle Obama’s call to further support our veterans in this way. We look forward to working with all partners to ensure our veterans are made aware of these new resources as they transition home and into our workforce.”

“Massachusetts leads the nation providing benefits and services to our veterans and their families,” said Massachusetts Department of Veterans’ Services Secretary Coleman Nee. “The VALOR Act was the most comprehensive and meaningful piece of legislation benefitting veterans and their families in recent memory. I applaud the Patrick-Murray Administration and my colleagues in state government for stepping to the plate and implementing these guidelines to ensure veterans and their families have every opportunity to use their skills and training toward successful careers here in Massachusetts.”

Among the state agencies involved in professional licensing, the Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) oversees 31 licensing boards that have licensed more than 370,000 individuals and businesses in a wide range of professions and trades including electricians, plumbers, engineers, architects and allied health professionals.

Each of the 31 DPL Boards of Registration will now:

- Accept relevant education, training and service completed by a license applicant as a member of the armed forces or the military reserves toward the qualifications required for licensure;

- Allow for the trade or professional license of a member of the armed forces who is on active duty to remain valid until he or she is released from active duty, and for 90 days thereafter; and

- Expedite the licensure process for military spouses who are licensed in other states and have left employment there to accompany a spouse relocated to the Commonwealth due to a military transfer.

“We are honored to have military men and women return to the Commonwealth after deployment to join the ranks of our already talented workforce,” said Undersecretary of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation Barbara Anthony. “I am proud that the Division of Professional Licensure can offer these accommodations to help military families ensure a smooth transition back to civilian life.”

Within another state agency, the Registry of Motor Vehicles is officially adopting the Military Commercial Driver License Skills Test Waiver that allows a qualified service member or veteran to apply for a CDL without road skills testing. The test will be waived for veterans with two years of military experience operating vehicles representative of the Class of license applied for, during the 90 days prior to discharge from the service. The implementation of this waiver comes after a successful pilot with
Administration Announces Military Friendly Guidelines

the Massachusetts National Guard. Massachusetts will join 36 other states that have adopted this option.

“Easing the Commercial Driver Licensing process for our qualified military personnel and veterans is a tremendous customer service that MassDOT is proud to offer,” said Registrar of Motor Vehicles Rachel Kaprielian. “Our men and women will have access to greater employment opportunities with this valuable, marketable certification.”

The Massachusetts Department of Public Safety has also adopted and implemented measures to facilitate professional licensing to support this effort. Additionally, the Board of Registration within the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Health Professions Licensure provides members of the armed forces engaged in active service a six month grace period for license renewal following release from duty.

Examples of professions that now have, or are in the process of creating their own military-friendly regulations, protocols, or guidelines to make it easier for those who apply for licenses include, but are not limited to:

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<th>Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)</th>
<th>Paramedics</th>
<th>Nurses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dentists, Dental Hygienists and Dental Assistants</td>
<td>Pipefitters</td>
<td>Respiratory Therapists</td>
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<td>Genetic Counselors</td>
<td>Commercial Drivers</td>
<td>Community Health Workers</td>
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<td>Early Childcare Workers</td>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>Public Safety Professionals</td>
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<td>Electricians</td>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>Architects</td>
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A new website consolidating all areas of state licensing benefits for the military is now available at the state’s web portal www.MassVetsAdvisor.org. Last year the Patrick-Murray Administration launched the MassVetsAdvisor web portal to help veterans and their family members access more than 200 state and federal benefits in one location. In addition to the newly added licensing benefits, MassVetsAdvisor provides access to programs for education, counseling, employment, health care and other services.

"We applaud Massachusetts for their efforts to recognize our Service Members and the skills they bring to employers," said Brigadier General Marianne Watson, the National Guard Bureau’s Director of Personnel. "This type of collaboration recognizes their military training, experience and professionalism as they transition to the civilian work force. This initiative supports all Service members transitioning from active duty, and National Guard and Reserve personnel who are unemployed within our communities. This forward thinking demonstrates a state-based solution providing opportunities to Service Members, and employers gain employees who are team focused and committed to their organization."

"By implementing the VALOR ACT, the Patrick-Murray administration has once again removed barriers for Veterans seeking employment using their hard-earned military training and skills in the civilian work force," said Major General L. Scott Rice, The Adjutant General, Massachusetts National Guard. "The National Guard is proud to
have been part of a successful pilot program that allows a qualified service member or veteran to apply for a CDL without road skills testing. Our service members take time away from their loved ones to train and hone their military skills in order to serve our country, but it also important to know that they also take time away from jobs and from civilian professional development, which can cause them to fall behind their peers. Often their military and civilian jobs are the same and in many cases the standards are the same so it is essential that they receive the credit and benefits both they and their families deserve.

“Governor Patrick, Lieutenant Governor Murray, Secretary Nee and Registrar Kaprielian have been true and tireless advocates for our veterans, military and their families,” said Senator Mike Rush. “There has been true partnership between the Administration and the Legislature as we have worked to empower our state agencies and the public with an understanding of the unique needs of this community. As men and women are returning from overseas, I am proud that Massachusetts is able to greet them with the appreciation and support they, and their families, deserve. I am confident the needs of our veterans will remain the highest priority in Massachusetts.”

The Patrick-Murray Administration is a leading provider for veteran services and continues to implement employment assistance and workforce training programs for members of the armed forces, veterans and their spouses. In 2011, the Administration launched an aggressive employment campaign aimed to increase the hiring of Massachusetts veterans. Among these initiatives, the Patrick-Murray Administration partnered with major trade associations to encourage them to hire veterans and circulate information on veterans’ benefits.

To lead by example, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor called for the establishment of an Interagency Taskforce on Hiring Veterans within the Executive Branch. The Secretary of Administration and Finance charged the head of the Human Resources Division along with Taskforce members to take a critical look at the Executive Branch’s current policies, processes and practices on hiring veterans and recently completed this plan.

In early March, Governor Deval Patrick also signed an executive order to help small businesses owned by disabled veterans increase access to contracts for public projects in the areas of construction, design and goods and services procurement. This executive order also follows the Governor’s authorization of the VALOR Act to provide greater assistance to help veteran-owned small business participate in public projects.

To learn more about services for Massachusetts veterans, visit www.mass.gov/veterans.

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