

Opportunity for ... All?

March 13, 2019

Simple pleasures are the best.
So are simple questions.

Senate Bill 2306 in North Dakota “would make it easier for spouses of military personnel to transfer their existing occupational licenses for use in North Dakota, provided they are in good standing and licensed by a reasonable entity,” explains Rob Port at his *SayAnythingBlog*.

Occupational licensing has exploded, covering a mere 4-5 percent of occupations 60 years ago, but nearly 30 percent today. That’s a serious hurdle for folks trying to break into the marketplace.

“[W]hy not make this sort of license reciprocity good for everyone moving into our state?” Mr. Port adroitly inquired.

Over at the Foundation for Economic Education, economist Daniel Mitchell calls licensing a “win-win” for politicians and interest groups that “get to impose barriers that limit competition.”

Not winning? Taxpayers and consumers, says Mitchell. “Or a poor person who wants to get a job.”

An Institute for Justice report released last



November concluded that “licensing costs the American economy \$197.3 billion” annually by “preventing people from working in the occupations for which they are best suited” and “forcing people to fulfill burdensome licensing requirements that do not raise quality.” Meanwhile, the health and safety benefits attributable to this licensing labyrinth seem scant.

A recent *Grand Forks Herald* editorial endorsing SB-2306 pointed to the state’s “more than 13,000 unfilled jobs, many of which require licensing,” arguing that “[o]ften, trailing military spouses are qualified to fill those openings, but because of the existing licensing process they are not able to immediately work.”

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Yes, Big Government: *Tear down these barriers!*

For all.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.