

December 2, 2020

The Honorable Jack O'Malley  
Chair, House Committee on Transportation  
Michigan House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Chairman O'Malley:

As the leading milk marketing cooperative and dairy foods processor in the United States, Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) is dedicated to delivering wholesome dairy products from our family farms to family tables around the world. An efficient logistics structure is key to serving the farmers who own the cooperative as well as the customers who rely on the nutritious dairy products we produce. To that end, we are in support of HB 6298 as it is a component that moves Michigan towards a national program known as the Even Exchange Program for Military Veterans. This program helps provide options for experienced veterans with truck driving experience to secure their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) through an expedited process.

The long-standing commercial truck driver shortage continues to present issues for the agricultural sector, posing continual challenges as we look to efficiently pick up and deliver milk. Recent events have put additional strain on the current transportation workforce. We believe there is opportunity to fill some of these vacancies and new positions by recruiting military veterans.

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), all states have implemented the Military Skills Test Waiver Program, which allows drivers with two years' experience safely operating heavy military vehicles to obtain a CDL without taking the driving test (skills test). To date, more than 26,000 service members and veterans have taken advantage of this waiver program. The Even Exchange Program goes one step further and incorporates an exemption from the written test, referred to as the knowledge test, as well.

To date, fourteen states have implemented the Even Exchange Program, allowing military veterans with relevant experience to obtain a waiver for both the skills test and knowledge test.

The Even Exchange Program provides an opportunity for qualified military veterans to transition to a civilian career and addresses a critical need in the food distribution chain. Again, DFA supports HB 6298 which helps Michigan implement the Even Exchange Program and streamline the process of recruiting military drivers into open civilian trucking positions.



The 13,000+ members of DFA look forward to working with you to create opportunities for military veterans and for those in need of qualified drivers. I can be reached at 216-904-6343 or [scorin@dfamilk.com](mailto:scorin@dfamilk.com).

Sincerely,



Scott Corrin  
Director of Operations and Business Development

Cc:

Members of the Michigan House Committee on Transportation  
Michigan Representative Greg Markkanen  
Director Gary McDowell, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Stephanie Walsh, Dairy Farmers of America

