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City and religious leaders combine to solve problems, make life better.

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# ARKANSAS

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**Gov. Asa Hutchinson**, surrounded by family members of service members who died in war zones, signs a bill designating Interstate 630 in Little Rock as a Gold Star Families Highway.

## Laws focus on military families

Governor signs 3 bills on licensing, school access, highways

**JOHN MORITZ**  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE  
Gov. Asa Hutchinson gave his signature on Friday to three pieces of legislation that he described as “pro-military family bills.”

The keystone piece of legislation in the trio — which became Act 820 of 2019 — makes automatic the professional licensing process for active-duty military, returning veterans and their spouses.

State law already requires Arkansas’ licensing boards and commissions to expedite their process for military personnel,

and their spouses. However, in a written statement of intent attached to the bill, lawmakers declared that those entities were not satisfactorily following the law. With the new law, those boards would be required to automatically grant professional licenses to military personnel, veterans and their spouses covered under the law if those people have an equivalent license issued by another state or territory.

“This has ... been an initiative of all of us in state government to make it easier for people to transfer licenses to

Arkansas,” Hutchinson said. “And this impacts military families particularly.”

“They might not be here long enough to go through a licensure requirement,” the governor added, referring to family members who follow their military spouses when they are posted in the state.

Act 820 was sponsored by state Sen. Missy Irvin, R-Mountain View. A bill-signing ceremony at the state Capitol on Friday was attended by Irvin, several other state lawmakers,

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## Military

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Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin and a host of active-duty service members as well as veterans. Griffin is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

The governor also signed into law Act 939, which made changes to the state law governing equitable access to public and charter schools for military children. The sponsor of the bill, Rep. LeAnne Burch, D-Monticello, said the legislation clarified the law’s application to a growing number of

children in the state whose parents serve in the reserve forces.

Burch is a retired brigadier general in the U.S. Army Reserve.

The last bill signed by the governor on Friday, which became Act 1070, designated a busy stretch of Interstate 630 through central Little Rock as a “Gold Star Families Highway.” Gold Star families are relatives of service men and women who have been killed in action.

A stretch of Arkansas 163 in eastern Arkansas, south of Jonesboro, also is designated as a Gold Star Families Highway.

Very special thanks to  
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Click [<here>](#) for photos  
from the Bill Signing event!

Arkansas Gold Star Memorial site:  
[<click here>](#)