

Legislative Update:

The National Defense Appropriations Act for FY 2016 contains a specific, new provision on the subject of certification accreditation entitled, "Quality Assurance of Certification Programs and Standards for Professional Credentials Obtained by Members of the Armed Forces," which includes the following provisions:

"(c) Quality Assurance of Certification Program and Standards--(1) Commencing not later than three years after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, each [Service] Secretary concerned shall ensure that any credentialing program used in connection with the program under subsection (a) is accredited by an accreditation body that meets the requirements specified in paragraph (2).

"(2) The requirements for accreditation bodies specified in this paragraph are requirements that an accreditation body--

- (A) be an independent body that has in place mechanisms to ensure objectivity and impartiality in its accreditation activities;***
- (B) meet a recognized national or international standard that directs its policy and procedures regarding accreditation;***
- (C) apply a recognized national or international certification standard in making its accreditation decisions regarding certification bodies and programs;***
- (D) conduct on-site visits, as applicable, to verify the documents and records submitted by credentialing bodies for accreditation;***
- (E) have in place policies and procedures to ensure due process when addressing complaints and appeals regarding its accreditation activities;***
- (F) conduct regular training to ensure consistent and reliable decisions among reviewers conducting accreditations; and***
- (G) meet such other criteria as the Secretary concerned considers appropriate in order to ensure quality in its accreditation activities."***