

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2040

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to increasing employment for veterans.

Brief Description: Initiating a campaign to increase veteran employment.

Sponsors: Representatives McCabe, Caldier, Senn, Harris, McBride, Dent, Johnson, Sells, Kagi, Kilduff and Wilson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/17/15, 2/19/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Initiates a campaign to increase veteran employment.
- Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to maintain a database of campaign participants.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Sawyer and Van De Wege.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

Veteran Employment Preferences.

Both federal and state law provide preferences for veterans in employment in federal, state, and local government. In Washington, if a veteran must take a competitive examination for public employment qualification purposes, 5- or 10-percentage points will be added to an eligible veteran's passing score. If an examination is not required, eligible veterans, their

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

surviving spouses, and spouses of honorably discharged veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability are preferred for public employment.

In 2011 legislation was enacted that allows private employers to also give voluntary hiring preferences to honorably discharged veterans.

Veterans Advisory Boards.

The legislative authority for each county is required to establish a veterans' advisory board. The board must advise the legislative authority of the needs of local indigent veterans, resources available to local indigent veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of the local indigent veterans and their families. Members of the board must be veterans. The majority of board members must be from a nationally recognized veterans organization.

Associate Development Organizations.

An associated development organization (ADO) is a local economic development nonprofit corporation that is broadly representative of community interests. Associated development organizations serve as a point of contact for local economic development activities, supporting new business development and recruitment, and coordinating business retention and expansion activities within their area and are commonly referred to as an economic development council. Each county in Washington has designated an organization as their ADO. There are 34 ADOs total. The Department of Commerce contracts with each of the ADOs to provide technical and financial support for ADOs activities.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department Veterans Affairs, Employment Security Department, and Department of Commerce are required to consult local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses to initiate a campaign to increase veteran employment in Washington. "Veteran" is defined as any honorably discharged veteran.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is required to maintain a database of state agencies, local governments, local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses that have chosen to participate in the campaign. All participants in the campaign are encouraged to work with veterans' advisory boards. Funds used for the campaign must be from existing resources.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the definition of "veteran" to any veteran discharged under honorable conditions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2015.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The campaign to increase veteran employment fills a void that is currently not being met in communities. The idea behind the campaign is not to incentivize businesses to hire veterans, but for businesses to hire veterans because they served our country and for each business to hire at least one veteran. The campaign may initially need to be made smaller to prevent a fiscal impact and to demonstrate that the program can be successful. The national veteran unemployment rate is 22 percent and this legislation is an excellent way to decrease the unemployment rate.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McCabe, prime sponsor; Alfie Alvarado, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; Ted Wicorek and Dick Marcelynas, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.