
State Government Committee

HB 3035

Brief Description: Providing compensation and benefits to active duty military members.

Sponsors: Representatives Darneille, Benson, Rodne, Hunt, Romero, O'Brien, Simpson, G., Morrell, Linville, Fromhold, Lovick, Conway, Rockefeller, Chase, Lantz, Ormsby and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the State to pay the difference between military pay and state pay for state employees called to service in the uniformed services.

Hearing Date: 2/5/04

Staff: Katie Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

Due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, thousands of Washington National Guard troops have been called to active duty in the United States Armed Forces. A significant number of U.S. military reserve units located in Washington have also been deployed. The activation of the 81st Armor Brigade, a unit of the Washington Army National Guard, in November 2003 is the largest deployment of Washington Guardsmen since World War II. Once activated for more than 30 days, National Guardsmen receive a salary and health benefits, and are eligible to pay for life insurance. Reservists may pay for health benefits for dependents in the military health system called TRICARE.

Both federal and state law require employers to return reservists to their former civilian positions, or to a position of similar seniority, status and pay, once they return from active duty. An exception does exist if the employer's circumstances have so changed that reemployment is impossible or unreasonable.

Reservists who are also state, county, municipal, or other political subdivision employees in civilian jobs are allowed 15 days of paid leave for training that is in addition to any sick leave or vacation. Reservists employed by the State may repay pension contributions not paid during the time of activation in order to receive pension plan credit for that period of time.

Summary of Bill:

A state employee called to service for more than 15 days after July 1, 2004 shall receive the difference between his or her state pay and military pay as long as the military pay is less than the state pay. The employee shall also continue to receive any pension, retirement, health insurance, and life insurance benefits he or she was receiving prior to activation as long as the employee continues to make any employee contributions normally required of state employees. Pay and benefits provided under this program cannot exceed four years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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