

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1127

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 22, 2008

Title: An act relating to military leave of absence.

Brief Description: Extending military leaves for public employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Campbell, Green, VanDeWege, Sells, Takko, McDonald, Blake, Moeller, Kenney, Appleton, Flannigan, Hunt, Conway, Lantz, Kagi, Linville, Chase, Wallace, Ormsby, Haigh, Simpson, Hurst, Sullivan, Kelley, Rolfes, McCune, Haler and Santos.

Brief History: Passed House: 1/16/08, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/22/08 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/29/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, McDermott, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Cindy Calderon (786-7784)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Erik Sund (786-7454)

Background: An officer or employee of the state or local government, who is a member of: the Washington National Guard; a reservist with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or Marine Corps; or of any organized reserve or armed forces of the United States, is entitled to 15 days of military leave of absence from employment each year. This leave is granted so the military member may report for active duty or active training duty. The member will still receive his or her normal pay during this leave; taking leave will not result in any loss of efficiency rating, privileges, or pay.

The Ready Reserves is comprised of military members of the Reserve and National Guard, organized in units or as individuals. Each member, reservist or National Guard, is required to perform a minimum number of training days annually. A member must participate in at least

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48 scheduled drills or training periods during each year and serve on active duty for training at least 14 days but not more than 30 days each year.

Summary of Bill: Military leave of absence is extended from 15 to 30 days each year, beginning October 1 and ending September 30.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Individuals in the Reserve and National Guard should not have to use their vacation and other types of leave to complete their mandated military training. They should be able to save their personal leave and vacation leave to spend with their families. Since 9-11, there has been a shift in how the Reserve Forces are used. Rather than a strategic force it is an operational force, which results in more frequent mobilization and more training. The burden of the additional training should not be put on the individual serving. With respect to backfilling positions while these individuals are training, it has to be done regardless of how many days of leave are given.

CON: The fiscal issue is a matter of concern. A number of individuals who serve also work for the cities in positions of public safety, such as the police and fire fighters. These individuals are highly trained, highly skilled, and cannot be replaced simply by hiring someone else. The result of this bill will be overtime and additional costs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; Bryan Grenon, Jared Matheson, citizens; Skip Dreps, Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America.

CON: Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.