

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5633

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Security, February 12, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to creating a coordinator for the helmets to hardhats program in the department of veterans affairs.

**Brief Description:** Creating a coordinator for the helmets to hardhats program in the department of veterans affairs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Conway, O'Ban, Hobbs, Chase, Kohl-Welles, Lias, McCoy and Hatfield.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Security: 2/12/15 [DP-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

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

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Lias, Ranking Minority Member; McCoy.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** Helmets to Hardhats is a national nonprofit program designed to connect National Guard, Reserve, retired, and transitioning active-duty military service members with skilled training and career opportunities in the construction industry.

The program provides former and transitioning military personnel with job postings from the building and construction trades nationwide, which can be accessed online. To apply for work or membership, a candidate for employment completes a profile that informs hiring managers what transferable skills the candidate acquired during military service. Once a candidate submits interest in a career opportunity, they are contacted by a Helmets to Hardhats representative to ensure all application requirements are met.

**Summary of Bill:** A coordinator for the Helmets to Hardhats program is established in the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, subject to available funding.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*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.*

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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: There is an enormous need to help the veterans leaving Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) who are looking for work. The federal government has pulled back from supporting this program, and last year we lost our coordinator, who serves as the bridge between the bases and the construction industry. The program gives people leaving the service an opportunity to get great jobs and apprenticeships. Hiring is beginning to pick up in the construction industry, and this presents a great opportunity to move veterans into good-paying jobs. Washington brought in the most veterans of any state when we had this position filled. Since 2012 opportunities for apprenticeship have tripled, but we haven't been able to put veterans into those slots because we don't have a person to make that connection. Nearly 700 service members are passing through Stone Education Center at JBLM daily, but there's nobody there linking them to jobs.

OTHER: The Department of Veterans Affairs is in favor of this bill. The number of veterans in the state is going to increase if there's a further reduction of troops and civilian jobs at bases. This particular position would align employers and trades with service members who have experience and need to get into the trades. The program has had a great success rate in the past and creates an improved quality of life for veterans and families.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Conway, prime sponsor; Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Todd Mitchell, Heat & Frost Insulators; Christopher Winters, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council # 5.

OTHER: Alfie Alvarado, WA State Dept. of Veterans Affairs.