
**Community Development, Housing &
Tribal Affairs Committee**

HB 2456

Brief Description: Increasing employment opportunities for spouses of military members.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, McCabe, Orwall, Reeves, Kraft, Senn, Gregerson, Muri, Riccelli, Stanford, Tharinger and Young.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Labor and Industries to initiate a campaign to increase employment opportunities for spouses of military members serving on active duty.
- Requires the Department of Employment Security to report increasing participation in unemployment insurance by spouses of military members while on overseas deployment.

Hearing Date: 1/17/18

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Veteran Employment Campaign. In 2015, the Legislature created a campaign, known as "YesVets," to increase veteran employment. The campaign consists of a partnership among the Departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Labor and Industries, businesses, association development organizations, and local chambers of commerce across the state, and includes businesses sharing information about veteran employment. The campaign allows businesses to report and receive recognition for hiring veterans.

Unemployment Insurance. The unemployment insurance system provides partial wage replacement benefits for workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. An individual who quits work to relocate for the employment of a spouse, including a mandatory

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military transfer, quits work for good cause. An individual is eligible to receive unemployment benefits if he or she:

- worked at least 680 hours in covered employment in his or her base year;
- was separated from employment through no fault of his or her own or quit work for good cause; and
- is able to work and is actively searching for suitable work.

For each week in which an individual files a claim for benefits, he or she must make at least three contacts with employers or participate in three in-person job search activities at the local WorkSource office, or do any combination of three employer contacts or in-person job-search activities.

Summary of Bill:

Military Spouse Employment Campaign. The Departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Labor and Industries, must consult with local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses to initiate a demonstration campaign to increase employment opportunities for spouses of military members on active duty. Such a campaign may include partnerships with chambers of commerce that results in businesses sharing information with the Department of Commerce on the number of military members' spouses employed.

Study on Unemployment Insurance for Military Spouses. The Employment Security Department must study how the unemployment insurance program can provide greater opportunities for the spouses of military members to participate in the program while on overseas deployment with their military spouse. The Department must confer with relevant state and federal agencies on the labor market and job resources for spouses on overseas military base, including opportunities to work remotely and resources available on military bases that can assist with remote work opportunities.

By December 1, 2019, the Department must report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, on how to implement the study. The report should include any proposed legislation that may be required to comply with federal regulations. The study and report must be conducted within existing resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/16/18.

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