

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SENATE BILL 5849**

65th Legislature  
2017 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate April 17, 2017  
Yeas 48 Nays 0

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**President of the Senate**

Passed by the House April 11, 2017  
Yeas 98 Nays 0

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**Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Approved

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**Governor of the State of Washington**

CERTIFICATE

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SENATE BILL 5849** as passed by Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

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**Secretary**

FILED

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

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SENATE BILL 5849

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2017 Regular Session

**State of Washington**                      **65th Legislature**                      **2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Angel, Bailey, Rolfes, Braun, Brown, Sheldon, Pearson, Becker, Fortunato, Wilson, Palumbo, O'Ban, Warnick, and Conway

Read first time 02/22/17. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1            AN ACT Relating to veterans' services; amending RCW 43.60A.100;  
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.41 RCW; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 43.60A RCW; and creating new sections.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6            (1) Veterans are national heroes who have made great sacrifices  
7 in their lives for the protection of our nation;

8            (2) Due to the relatively high number of military installations  
9 in our state, as well as the standard of living in our state, many  
10 veterans choose to live in Washington;

11           (3) Many veterans have a need for support services, including  
12 peer-to-peer counseling services. Some veterans need to talk about  
13 their experiences with combat, deployment, or other situations  
14 experienced during their time in the military. Often, there is no  
15 person better prepared to speak with a veteran about his or her  
16 experiences than another veteran;

17           (4) In 2009, the state of Texas created an award winning peer-to-  
18 peer counseling network, called the military veteran peer network. On  
19 a voluntary basis, veterans elect to receive specialized training  
20 about the facilitation of group counseling sessions. After receiving

1 their training, the volunteers create peer-to-peer support groups in  
2 their local communities;

3 (5) Veterans living in Washington would benefit from a program  
4 that is similar to the military veteran peer network.

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.60A.100 and 1991 c 55 s 1 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 The department of veterans affairs, to the extent funds are made  
8 available, shall: (1) Contract with professional counseling  
9 specialists to provide a range of direct treatment services to  
10 ~~((war))~~ combat-affected state veterans and to those national guard  
11 and reservists who served in the Middle East, and their family  
12 members; (2) provide additional treatment services to Washington  
13 state Vietnam veterans for posttraumatic stress disorder,  
14 particularly for those veterans whose posttraumatic stress disorder  
15 has intensified or initially emerged due to ~~((the-war))~~ combat in the  
16 Middle East; (3) provide an educational program designed to train  
17 primary care professionals, such as ~~((mental))~~ behavioral health  
18 professionals, about the effects of ~~((war))~~ combat-related stress and  
19 trauma; (4) provide informational and counseling services for the  
20 purpose of establishing and fostering peer-support networks  
21 throughout the state for families of deployed members of the reserves  
22 and the Washington national guard; (5) provide for veterans'  
23 families, a referral network of community mental health providers who  
24 are skilled in treating deployment stress, combat stress, and  
25 posttraumatic stress; and (6) offer training and support for  
26 volunteers interested in providing peer-to-peer support to other  
27 veterans.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The legislature finds that:

29 (1) Washington state provides a stated preference for hiring  
30 veterans and provides a scoring preference for hiring and promotional  
31 opportunities to veterans in the form of enhanced test scores;

32 (2) Few agencies outside of law enforcement use tests in hiring  
33 or promotion;

34 (3) Veterans have experience that is broader than law enforcement  
35 and the state can benefit by recruiting people with this experience;

36 (4) Veterans leave service with experience in transportation,  
37 teaching and education, logistics, computer technology, health care,

1 media and communications, construction and engineering, and  
2 administrative support;

3 (5) Many state agencies and other public employers are struggling  
4 to fill and retain employees in key positions;

5 (6) Many public and private employers have developed veteran  
6 hiring and recruitment programs that take advantage of the broad  
7 experience that veterans bring to the job market.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41  
9 RCW to read as follows:

10 (1) The office shall develop a military recruitment program that  
11 targets veterans and gives them credit for their knowledge, skills,  
12 and leadership abilities. In developing the program, the office shall  
13 consult with the department of enterprise services, department of  
14 veteran affairs, the state military transition council, the veterans  
15 employee resource group, and other interested stakeholders. Program  
16 development must include, but is not limited to, identifying: (a)  
17 Public and private military recruitment programs and ways those  
18 programs can be used in Washington; (b) similar military and state  
19 job classes and develop a system to provide veterans with experience  
20 credit for similar work; and (c) barriers to state employment and  
21 opportunities to better utilize veterans experience.

22 (2) The office shall report to the legislature with a draft plan  
23 by January 1, 2018, that includes draft bill language if necessary.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 By December 31, 2018, the department of veterans affairs must  
27 submit a report to the legislature on the veteran peer-to-peer  
28 training and support program authorized in section 2 of this act to  
29 determine the effectiveness of the program in meeting the needs of  
30 veterans in the state. The report must include the number of veterans  
31 receiving peer-to-peer support and the location of such support  
32 services; the number of veterans trained through the program to  
33 provide peer-to-peer support; and the types of training and support  
34 services provided by the program. The report must also include an  
35 analysis of peer-to-peer training and support programs developed by  
36 other states, as well as in the private and nonprofit sectors, in  
37 order to evaluate best practices for implementing and managing the

1 veteran peer-to-peer training and support program authorized in  
2 section 2 of this act.

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