

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1328

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing, Community Development & Veterans

Title: An act relating to increasing employment opportunities for spouses of military members.

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

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Leavitt, Orwall, Mosbrucker, Reeves, Ryu, Stanford and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Community Development & Veterans: 1/30/19, 2/5/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Employment Security Department, and Department of Commerce to initiate a demonstration campaign to increase military spouse employment.
- Requires the Office of Financial Management to develop a plan for a military spouse recruitment program.
- Requires each state agency employing 1,000 or more people to submit an annual report to the State Human Resources Director and the DVA that includes certain employment data and information.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & VETERANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Gildon, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Entenman, Frame, Leavitt and Reeves.

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

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.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the Employment Security Department (ESD), and the Department of Commerce (Commerce) are required to initiate a demonstration campaign to increase veteran employment. In initiating this campaign, the agencies are required to consult with local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses. The campaign may include partnerships with chambers of commerce and the exchange of information regarding veteran employment among business owners, the local chambers of commerce, and the DVA.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is required to develop a military recruitment program that targets veterans and gives them credit for their knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. In developing the program, the OFM is required to consult with the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), the DVA, the State Military Transition Council, the Veterans Employee Resource Group, and other interested stakeholders. Program development must include, but is not limited to, identifying: (a) public and private military recruitment programs and ways those programs can be used in Washington; (b) similar military and state job classes and developing a system to provide veterans with experience credit for similar work; and (c) barriers to state employment and opportunities to better utilize veterans' experience.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The DVA, the ESD, and Commerce must consult local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses to initiate a demonstration campaign to increase military spouse employment. The campaign may include partnerships with chambers of commerce and the exchange of information among business owners, the local chambers of commerce, and the DVA, regarding military spouse employment. Funding for the campaign must be established from existing resources.

The OFM must develop a plan for a military spouse recruitment program that targets military spouses and gives them credit for their knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. In developing the plan, the OFM must consult with the DES, the DVA, the State Military Transition Council, the Veterans Employee Resource Group, the ESD, and other interested stakeholders. The program development plan must include, but is not limited to, identifying:

- public and private military spouse recruitment programs and ways those programs can be used in Washington;
- barriers to state employment and opportunities to better utilize military spouses experience; and
- opportunities within Washington government employment for mobile work, telework, and other flexible work arrangements.

Funding for the military spouse recruitment plan must be established from existing resources. The OFM must report to the Legislature with a draft plan by January 1, 2020.

Each state agency employing 1,000 or more people must submit an annual report to the State Human Resources Director and the DVA that includes the following information:

- the number of employees from the previous calendar year;

- the number of employees who are military spouses; and
- employment opportunities within the agency that can be performed by agency staff who are physically located overseas or outside the State of Washington.

For purposes of the demonstration campaign, the recruitment program, and the agency reporting requirement, "military spouse" means any person married or previously married to a military service member, irrespective of the length of the marriage, during the military service member's service in any branch of the United States Armed Forces as an active duty service member, reservist, or National Guard member.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes the following changes to the original bill:

- requires the OFM to develop a plan for a military spouse recruitment program rather than develop the actual program and removes the requirement that the OFM identify the number of military spouses employed by the state of Washington as part of the plan; and
- requires state agencies employing 1,000 or more people to submit a report containing certain employment data to the DVA, in addition to the State Human Resources Director, and clarifies that the report is to be submitted to the State Human Resources Director rather than other agency human resource directors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When military families move, the spouses of military members often need to sever ties with their employers. Military spouses are often underemployed and have a high rate of unemployment despite often being highly educated. There is a huge societal cost to these lost opportunities but there is also a significant cost to military families who need a second income. This bill builds upon previous bills that have passed that create resources for veterans and extends those resources for military spouses. The data collection requirement will help the state understand more about military spouses as a demographic. There is a culture of bias and discrimination against military spouses in the workplace. This bill would make Washington a leader among states on social innovation in a way that would benefit military families.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Our military spouses and family members are displaced workers and there is nothing in place to help them with that transition. This bill is a first step in helping them. There are

very talented individuals that live on military installations that need quality employment. Raising awareness of this issue is very important.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Jamie Muskopf; Whitney Stafford, Center for Dialog and Resolution; Tanja Struyck-Fogleman; and Dick Marcelynas, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

(Other) Mary Forbes, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.