

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5900

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Promoting access to earned benefits and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Wilson, C., Takko, Saldaña, Van De Wege, Salomon, Liias, Das, Pedersen and Nguyen).

**Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Housing, Community Development & Veterans**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is a state agency created in 1975. WDVA's powers and duties include cooperating with local governments and the federal government, particularly regarding participation in federal grants-in-aid programs relating to veterans and veterans affairs. WDVA provides many services to veterans and their families, including medical care; assistance with claims for benefits; estate management; counseling; financial assistance; and assisting veterans with education, training, and employment.

**Summary:** The position of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer coordinator is created within WDVA. The coordinator's duties include:

- conducting outreach to, and providing assistance designed for the unique needs of, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans, and their spouses and dependents;
- assisting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans in applying for an upgrade to the character of a discharge from service, or a change in the narrative reason for a discharge from service;
- assisting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans, and their spouses and dependents, in applying for benefits; and
- developing and distributing information to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans, and their spouses and dependents, regarding veterans' benefits and other benefit programs.

WDVA must prepare and submit a report to the Governor, the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, and the appropriate legislative standing committees regarding the

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implementation and status of the coordinator by December 15, 2021. This report must include the number of veterans served, the type of assistance provided, and any recommendations for improving and expanding services provided by the coordinator.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	43	4
House	87	10

**Effective:** June 11, 2020