
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5900

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

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

READ FIRST TIME 02/06/20.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting access to earned benefits and
2 services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans;
3 adding a new section to chapter 43.60A RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature declares that veterans
7 must be able to access and receive the benefits and services they
8 have earned in service to our country without regard to sexual
9 orientation or gender identity. The legislature further declares that
10 connecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer veterans to
11 their earned and related benefits and services, and to programs,
12 resources, and information about such benefits and services, promotes
13 the economic security and financial stability of veterans, and their
14 spouses and dependents.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) The position of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and
18 queer coordinator is created within the department.

19 (2) The duties of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and
20 queer coordinator include, but are not limited to:

1 (a) Conducting outreach to, and providing assistance designed for
2 the unique needs of, veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual,
3 transgender, and queer, and to the spouses and dependents of such
4 veterans;

5 (b) Providing assistance to veterans who are lesbian, gay,
6 bisexual, transgender, and queer in applying for an upgrade to the
7 character of a discharge from service or a change in the narrative
8 reason for a discharge from service;

9 (c) Providing assistance in applying for and obtaining veterans'
10 benefits and benefits available through other programs that provide
11 services and resources to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual,
12 transgender, and queer, and to the spouses and dependents of such
13 veterans;

14 (d) Providing assistance to veterans who are lesbian, gay,
15 bisexual, transgender, and queer in applying for, and in appealing
16 any denial of, federal and state veterans' benefits and aid that such
17 veterans, and the spouses and dependents of such veterans, may be
18 entitled to; and

19 (e) Developing and distributing informational materials to
20 veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, and
21 to the spouses and dependents of such veterans, regarding veterans'
22 benefits and other benefit programs that provide services and
23 resources to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
24 and queer, and to the spouses and dependents of such veterans.

25 (3) No later than December 15, 2021, the department must prepare
26 and submit a report to the governor, the joint committee on veterans'
27 and military affairs, and the appropriate standing committees of the
28 legislature regarding the implementation and status of the position
29 of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer coordinator created
30 under subsection (1) of this section. The report must include, at a
31 minimum, information regarding the following:

32 (a) The number of veterans served;

33 (b) The type of assistance provided;

34 (c) Recommendations for the improvement and expansion of the
35 services provided by the coordinator; and

36 (d) Recommendations for legislative changes.

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