

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1122

As Passed House:
February 25, 2021

Title: An act relating to the retirement age for state guard members.

Brief Description: Concerning the retirement age for state guard members.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Klippert, Ryu, Goodman, MacEwen and Orwall.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Human Services & Veterans: 1/19/21, 1/28/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/25/21, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the age restriction for enlistment with the Washington State Guard.
- Allows the Adjutant General to extend the service age of an active member of the Washington State Guard under certain conditions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Caldier, Ranking Minority Member; Gilday, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Bateman, Chopp, Leavitt and Thai.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Guard (Guard) is a volunteer military unit organized under the Washington State Military Department and serving under the direction of the state's Adjutant General. Guard members are available to serve the Governor in place of the National Guard in the event that the National Guard in Washington is called into federal service. The Governor may also call the Guard into state service in other instances, including natural disasters, search and rescue, or recovery operations.

Members of the Guard may serve up until age 64. The Adjutant General may extend the service age upon request by an active member of the Guard if the Adjutant General determines the member's extension would be in the best interest of the Guard. Extensions are for a one-year duration and may be renewed until the member attains age 68.

Summary of Bill:

The age limit on enlistment to the Guard is eliminated and shall be set in regulation by the Adjutant General or his or her designee. The Adjutant General or his or her designee may extend a Guard member's service age for a two-year duration upon the request of an active member of the Guard. An extension may be renewed beyond age 64 if:

- the member is physically and mentally capable of completing all assigned mission tasks; and
- the Washington State Guard Officer Review Board recommends the extension.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This policy is significant because it will create a larger pool of service men and women who are able to serve in the Guard. The brave men and women in the Guard are those whom our state relies on for protection. In his final speech, Dr. Martin Luther King said we have some difficult days ahead. Our state faces difficult days and our Guard will be willing to help Washingtonians during this time. When a citizen is able to perform the essential requirements of the job, they should be able to serve in this volunteer organization. The Guard is a force multiplier to the National Guard. These members serve because they feel called to serve this state. Physical fitness is tied to age but also to how someone cares for themselves. There are examples in the Army's history where members have been called back into active duty when they are over age 70. During this pandemic many of these members who would like to serve are doctors, nurses, and other health providers that can assist.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Lovick, prime sponsor; Peter Lukevich; Catherine Zylstra.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.