

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1122

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, March 24, 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: Passed House: 2/25/21, 98-0.

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 3/19/21, 3/24/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the age restriction for enlistment with the Washington State Guard (Guard).
- Allows the adjutant general to extend the service age of an active member of the Guard under certain conditions.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Hasegawa and Hawkins.

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: 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 if 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

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disasters, search and rescue, or recovery operations.

The period of enlistment in the Guard is set by rules adopted by the adjutant general. The term of service for an original enlistment must be completed before the applicant reaches 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 one-year and may be renewed until the member reaches age 68.

Summary of Bill: The age limit for enlistment to the Guard is eliminated. The adjutant general, or the adjutant general's designee, has full discretion to decide the period of enlistment for Guard members and may extend a Guard member's service age beyond age 64 upon request of an active member of the Guard. Extensions may be granted for a two-year period 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.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill simply extends retirement age for guard members but it is significant because it increases the pool of members available to serve our state. During the Oso mud slide over 100 agencies responded to assist with recovery, rescue and clean up, including the Washington Guard who provide exceptional service to the community and the state during that difficult time. By extending the retirement age we will maintain a larger pool of men and women who we rely on for our safety and protection. As a retired Army Major, I learned that my full participation in the guard was restricted by a number, 64, this would allow for me and others to fully participate in the Guard and serve. This group represents over 459 years of service and experience in this volunteer support group which includes people from so many backgrounds who are willing, able, and capable to serve the state of Washington. The bill would merely give these men and women who choose to participate the full opportunity to do so.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Peter Lukevich.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.