

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5970

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

Title: An act relating to evaluating military training and experience toward meeting licensing requirements.

Brief Description: Evaluating military training and experience toward meeting licensing requirements.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, McCoy, Schoesler, Hobbs, Hatfield, Conway, Rolfes, Holmquist Newbry and Braun.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/20/14 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by Committee)

- Provides that military training and experience satisfies requirements for professional licensing if the training or experience is documented and is substantially equivalent to the requirements in state law.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Sawyer, Vice Chair; Holy, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Robinson, Santos and Young.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The Department of Licensing (DOL) regulates a variety of businesses and professions, and the Department of Health (DOH) regulates a variety of health professions. Each regulated business and profession has a separate set of laws and separate licensing requirements. Some

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businesses and professions are regulated under the direct authority of the DOL or the DOH, and others are under a board or commission charged with regulating the particular business or profession.

Licensing requirements for these professions vary considerably. Some of the licenses require college level coursework, or equivalent, and experience requirements. Other professions require some level of training, clinical training, or work experience to be licensed. Other professions might require an examination, a surety bond, minimum safety standards, or other requirements, but do not require that applicants have specific training or experience to be licensed.

In 2011 the Legislature directed that military training or experience apply towards licensing or certification requirements for certain designated professions, unless the regulating body of the profession determines that the training and experience is not substantially equivalent to the standards of the state. This requirement applies to certain health professions, including denturists, dispensing opticians, ocularists, pharmacy assistants, physician assistants, osteopathic physician assistants, emergency medical technicians, radiologic technologists, nursing assistants, respiratory care practitioners, health care assistants, surgical technologists, dental assistants, expanded function dental auxiliaries, physical therapists, and physical therapy assistants.

The requirement also applies to other business professions including architects, cosmetologists, barbers, manicurists, estheticians, engineers, land surveyors, security guards, auctioneers, embalmers and funeral directors, real estate brokers and managing brokers, landscape architects, appraisers, court reporters, private investigators, bail bond agents, on-site wastewater treatment system designers, geologists, home inspectors, body piercing and tattooing licensees, camping resort salespersons, notaries public, driver training school instructors, timeshare salespersons, and boxing, martial arts, and wrestling licensees.

The application of military training and experience towards licensing requirements does not apply to various other health and business professions that are licensed or certified by the state. Many of these professions are also regulated through the DOL and the DOH in Title 18 RCW, the general licensing title of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). Other agencies with regulatory authority under Title 18 RCW include: the Department of Labor and Industries (contractors and plumbers); the Board of Accountancy (certified public accountants); the Department of Ecology (licensed well digging); the Department of Financial Institutions (escrow agents); the State Director of Fire Protection; and county auditors (process servers).

Summary of Amended Bill:

For all professions licensed under Title 18 RCW and certain professions licensed by the DOL outside of Title 18 RCW, military training and experience must be recognized as satisfying any or all requirements for obtaining a professional license, certificate, registration, or permit if:

- the applicant provides documentation of completion of a military training or education program, experience working in an occupational or professional field in military service, a certificate or other acknowledgement of qualification, or any other relevant training and experience; and
- the training, experience, or other qualification is substantially equivalent to the requirements in state law.

If the board, commission, or other authority responsible for issuing the license determines that the training or experience is not substantially equivalent, it must inform the applicant in writing, identify the unmet criteria, and permit the applicant to submit additional documentation or information.

Each board, commission, or other authority must develop procedures to evaluate military training and experience and maintain a list of military training programs, certificates, awards, and work experience that it has approved in an application. The list of approved military programs must be submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs annually on December 1.

"Military" means any branch of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, and Armed Forces Reserves.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Certain RCW sections that reference military training and experience are repealed, as the bill requires all licensing bodies under Title 18 RCW to accept military training and experience.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended 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) This bill helps to recognize the service and sacrifice members of the military provide to the country. Military members gain many unique skills and training and develop remarkable work ethic while in service which is a great asset to employers. Service members' skills and training need to be recognized and accredited so that service members are put at the top of the hiring list.

The latest Bureau of Labor statistics information for 2013 show that 21.4 percent of 18- to 23-year-olds leaving service are unemployed versus 14.3 percent for non-veterans. Likewise, 9.1 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds leaving service are unemployed compared with 7.3 percent for non-veterans. In 2013, 11,173 newly separated veterans moved back to Washington. This year, 13,000 new veterans are expected to return to the state, which is a considerable increase from previous years due to the drawdown of active service members. While the

DOL and the DOH have been doing a great job transitioning, this bill offers a few more directives to those departments regarding the acceptance of military training and experience.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator O'Ban, prime sponsor; and Mark San Souci, Department of Defense.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.