

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2781

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, February 20, 1996

Title: An act relating to veterans' benefits.

Brief Description: Providing for veterans' preferences.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Basich, Regala, Conway, Reams, Grant, Elliot, Quall, Linville, Chandler, Hatfield, D. Sommers, Scheuerman, Stevens, McMahan, Buck, Sheldon, Tokuda, Poulsen, Cole, Chopp, Kessler, Costa, Thompson, D. Schmidt, Robertson and Cooke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 2/20/96 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Deccio, Franklin, Fraser and Wojahn.

Staff: Katie Healy (786-7403)

Background: Veterans receive specific preferences on competitive examinations for public employment. The preference must be claimed within eight years. Veterans also receive other benefits such as license and property tax benefits, military credit for retirement systems, potential tuition exemptions at state universities, and preference in purchasing state property. Counties levy a tax to create the veterans' assistance fund, used for aiding indigent veterans and their families. A county may be required to pay for the burial of indigent veterans.

The definition of veteran includes an individual who has received an honorable discharge or a discharge for physical reasons with an honorable record, and who served in World Wars I or II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era or any other declared war.

Summary of Bill: The definition of veteran is expanded. The definition of the Vietnam area is clarified. The Persian Gulf War and its respective dates are added as a period of war. Other recent armed conflicts are added. The period of time which an individual must have served active military duty in order to qualify for veteran preference on competitive examinations for public employment is added.

The veteran participating in competitive examinations for public employment must receive a veteran's preference, and must receive a passing grade on the examination in order to receive the preference. Further clarification is given as to when the preference is applied, and what percentage is applied.

A veteran's preference must be claimed within ten years of the individual's release from active military service, instead of eight years.

Technical changes and clarifications to language are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The definition of veteran is further expanded to include Bosnia. This law needs updating.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Basich, original prime sponsor (pro); John E. Lee, Deputy Director, Veterans Affairs (pro).