

SB 5849 - H AMD 530

By Representative Reeves

ADOPTED 04/11/2017

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

4 (1) Veterans are national heroes who have made great sacrifices
5 in their lives for the protection of our nation;

6 (2) Due to the relatively high number of military installations
7 in our state, as well as the standard of living in our state, many
8 veterans choose to live in Washington;

9 (3) Many veterans have a need for support services, including
10 peer-to-peer counseling services. Some veterans need to talk about
11 their experiences with combat, deployment, or other situations
12 experienced during their time in the military. Often, there is no
13 person better prepared to speak with a veteran about his or her
14 experiences than another veteran;

15 (4) In 2009, the state of Texas created an award winning peer-to-
16 peer counseling network, called the military veteran peer network. On
17 a voluntary basis, veterans elect to receive specialized training
18 about the facilitation of group counseling sessions. After receiving
19 their training, the volunteers create peer-to-peer support groups in
20 their local communities;

21 (5) Veterans living in Washington would benefit from a program
22 that is similar to the military veteran peer network.

23 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.60A.100 and 1991 c 55 s 1 are each amended to
24 read as follows:

25 The department of veterans affairs, to the extent funds are made
26 available, shall: (1) Contract with professional counseling
27 specialists to provide a range of direct treatment services to
28 (~~war~~) combat-affected state veterans and to those national guard
29 and reservists who served in the Middle East, and their family
30 members; (2) provide additional treatment services to Washington
31 state Vietnam veterans for posttraumatic stress disorder,
32 particularly for those veterans whose posttraumatic stress disorder

1 has intensified or initially emerged due to (~~the war~~) combat in the
2 Middle East; (3) provide an educational program designed to train
3 primary care professionals, such as (~~mental~~) behavioral health
4 professionals, about the effects of (~~war~~) combat-related stress and
5 trauma; (4) provide informational and counseling services for the
6 purpose of establishing and fostering peer-support networks
7 throughout the state for families of deployed members of the reserves
8 and the Washington national guard; (5) provide for veterans'
9 families, a referral network of community mental health providers who
10 are skilled in treating deployment stress, combat stress, and
11 posttraumatic stress; and (6) offer training and support for
12 volunteers interested in providing peer-to-peer support to other
13 veterans.

14 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. The legislature finds that:

15 (1) Washington state provides a stated preference for hiring
16 veterans and provides a scoring preference for hiring and promotional
17 opportunities to veterans in the form of enhanced test scores;

18 (2) Few agencies outside of law enforcement use tests in hiring
19 or promotion;

20 (3) Veterans have experience that is broader than law enforcement
21 and the state can benefit by recruiting people with this experience;

22 (4) Veterans leave service with experience in transportation,
23 teaching and education, logistics, computer technology, health care,
24 media and communications, construction and engineering, and
25 administrative support;

26 (5) Many state agencies and other public employers are struggling
27 to fill and retain employees in key positions;

28 (6) Many public and private employers have developed veteran
29 hiring and recruitment programs that take advantage of the broad
30 experience that veterans bring to the job market.

31 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 43.41
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 (1) The office shall develop a military recruitment program that
34 targets veterans and gives them credit for their knowledge, skills,
35 and leadership abilities. In developing the program, the office shall
36 consult with the department of enterprise services, department of
37 veteran affairs, the state military transition council, the veterans
38 employee resource group, and other interested stakeholders. Program

1 development must include, but is not limited to, identifying: (a)
2 Public and private military recruitment programs and ways those
3 programs can be used in Washington; (b) similar military and state
4 job classes and develop a system to provide veterans with experience
5 credit for similar work; and (c) barriers to state employment and
6 opportunities to better utilize veterans experience.

7 (2) The office shall report to the legislature with a draft plan
8 by January 1, 2018, that includes draft bill language if necessary.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 By December 31, 2018, the department of veterans affairs must
12 submit a report to the legislature on the veteran peer-to-peer
13 training and support program authorized in section 2 of this act to
14 determine the effectiveness of the program in meeting the needs of
15 veterans in the state. The report must include the number of veterans
16 receiving peer-to-peer support and the location of such support
17 services; the number of veterans trained through the program to
18 provide peer-to-peer support; and the types of training and support
19 services provided by the program. The report must also include an
20 analysis of peer-to-peer training and support programs developed by
21 other states, as well as in the private and nonprofit sectors, in
22 order to evaluate best practices for implementing and managing the
23 veteran peer-to-peer training and support program authorized in
24 section 2 of this act."

25 Correct the title.

EFFECT: (1) Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to report to the Legislature, by December 31, 2018, on the effectiveness of the peer-to-peer support program.

(2) Directs the Office of Financial Management to consult with the Veterans Employee Resource Group and the Washington State Military Transition Council in developing the military recruitment program.

(3) Changes reference from "war-related" to "combat-related" conditions in regards to service-related treatment and counseling programs.

(4) Changes reference from "mental health" to "behavioral health" professionals in regards to training primary care professionals on service-related stress and trauma.

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