

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1369

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to defining veteran for the purpose of receiving certain benefits.

Brief Description: Defining veteran for the purpose of receiving certain benefits.

Sponsors: House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Hayes, Muri, Kilduff, Appleton and Lovick).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/2/17, 2/7/17 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/27/17, 96-0.

Passed Senate: 4/4/17, 49-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the definition of "veteran" used to determine eligibility for certain benefits to include a person who is in receipt of separation orders or documents that characterize his or her service as honorable.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; McCabe, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin, Reeves and Sawyer.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

The definition of "veteran" is used as an eligibility requirement for various benefits, including free license plate decals, license plates for disabled veterans and prisoners of war,

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admission to state soldiers' and veterans' homes, veterans' scoring preference on civil service exams, and veteran homeownership down payment assistance programs.

For purposes of these benefits, a veteran is a person who has received an honorable discharge or received a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record, and who has served in at least one of the following capacities:

- as a member in any branch of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves, and has fulfilled his or her initial military service obligation;
- as a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots;
- as a member of the Armed Forces Reserves, National Guard, or Coast Guard and called into federal service for at least 180 cumulative days;
- as a civil service crew member aboard a United States Army or naval transport service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946;
- as a member of the Philippine Armed Forces/Scouts from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945; or
- a United States documented merchant mariner with service aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the Department of Defense or its agents from June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1952, in Korean territorial waters and from August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975, in Vietnam territorial waters, and who received a military commendation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The definition of "veteran" used to qualify persons for particular benefits is expanded to include a person who, at the time he or she seeks the benefits, is in receipt of certain documents that characterize his or her service as honorable.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The transition period for veterans between the time of release from service to civilian employment is a critical period of time and for many it can be daunting. Under current law, veterans in this transition period are not eligible to claim veterans hiring preference points for the purpose of applying for civil service employment because the law takes only into account the military member's formal end of service date. The bill takes into account the functional end of service date and formal service end date, allowing service members to receive hiring preference benefits during the transition period. This is an ideal period for service members to seek employment to avoid at-risk categorizations, such as homelessness and unemployment.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hayes, prime sponsor; and Joshua Dugan, Snohomish County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.