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**Housing, Community Development &  
Veterans Committee**

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**HB 1650**

**Brief Description:** Promoting access to earned benefits and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender veterans.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kilduff, Reeves, Orwall, Leavitt, Morgan, Doglio, Macri, Frame, Lovick, Peterson, Appleton, Ortiz-Self, Robinson, Valdez, Hudgins, Davis, Stanford, Bergquist and Tarleton.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates the position of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender coordinator (coordinator) within the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and assigns duties to the coordinator.
- Requires the DVA to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 15, 2020, containing information regarding the activities of the coordinator.

**Hearing Date:** 2/6/19

**Staff:** Cassie Jones (786-7303).

**Background:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is a state agency created in 1975. The powers and duties of the DVA include cooperating with local governments and the federal government, particularly regarding participation in federal grants-in-aid programs relating to veterans and veterans affairs. The DVA provides many services to veterans and their families, including medical care, assistance with claims for benefits, estate management, counseling, and financial assistance. The DVA assists veterans with education, training and employment.

**Summary of Bill:**

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The position of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender coordinator (coordinator) is created within the DVA. The duties of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- conducting outreach to, and providing assistance designed for the unique needs of, veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and to the spouses and dependents of such veterans;
- providing assistance to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in applying for an upgrade to the character of a discharge from service or a change in the narrative reason for a discharge from service;
- providing assistance in applying for and obtaining veterans benefits and benefits available through other programs that provide services and resources to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and to the spouses and dependents of such veterans; and
- developing and distributing informational materials to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and to the spouses and dependents of such veterans, regarding veterans' benefits and other benefit programs that provide services and resources to veterans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and to the spouses and dependents of such veterans.

The DVA must prepare and submit a report to the Governor, the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, and the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature regarding the implementation and status of the coordinator. This report must include the number of veterans served, the type of assistance provided, and the recommendations for the improvement and expansion of the services provided by the coordinator. The report is due December 15, 2020.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 30, 2019.

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