

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2736

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

Title: An act relating to the retirement age for state guard members.

Brief Description: Concerning the retirement age for state guard members.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Klippert and Leavitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Community Development & Veterans: 1/29/20, 1/31/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the age restriction for enlistment with the Washington State Guard (State Guard).
- Expands the Adjutant General's ability to extend the service age of an active member of the State Guard beyond existing limits and under certain conditions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Jenkin, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Frame, Johnson, J., Leavitt and Ramel.

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

The Washington State Guard (State Guard) is a military unit organized by the Washington State Military Department. Members of the State Guard are volunteers and serve under the direction of the state's Adjutant General. State Guard members are available to serve the Governor in place of the National Guard in the event that the National Guard in Washington is called into federal service. The Governor may also call the State Guard into state service in other instances, including natural disasters, search and rescue, or recovery operations.

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 period of enlistment in the State Guard is set by rules adopted by the Adjutant General. However, the term of service must be completed before the applicant reaches age 64. The Adjutant General may extend the service age upon request by an active member of the State Guard if the Adjutant General determines the member's extension would be in the best interest of the State Guard. Extensions are for a one-year duration and may be renewed until the member attains age 68.

Summary of Bill:

The age limit on enlistment to the State Guard is eliminated. The Adjutant General has full discretion to decide the period of enlistment for State Guard members. The Adjutant General may extend the service age upon request by an active member of the State Guard if the Adjutant General determines that the extension is in the best interest of the State Guard. Extensions have a one-year duration and may be renewed beyond the age of 64 if:

- the member is physically and mentally capable of completing all assigned mission tasks; and
 - the Washington State Guard Officer Review Board recommends the extension.
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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) Our State Guard steps up when the National Guard is called into service. State Guard members who wish to continue to serve beyond the limit should be able to do so. There are incredible soldiers who are over the age of 68 and are still mentally and physically able to serve and do a great job. These great soldiers love their country, and they want to continue to serve. State Guard members are volunteers; they operate under the sole authority of the state government. They are distinct from the National Guard in that they cannot be federalized. Most states use them as emergency management liaisons between the local government and the National Guard. This bill can help with recruiting and retention.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Representative Klippert; and Nancy Bickford, Washington Military Department.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.