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**HOUSE BILL 2456**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Kilduff, McCabe, Orwall, Reeves, Kraft, Senn, Gregerson, Muri, Riccelli, Stanford, Tharinger, and Young

AN ACT Relating to increasing employment opportunities for spouses of military members; adding a new section to chapter 18.340 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 50.20 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 18.340 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department of commerce, employment security department, and department of labor and industries, shall consult local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses to initiate a demonstration campaign to increase employment for spouses of military members on active duty. This campaign may include partnerships with chambers of commerce that result in business owners sharing, with the local chamber of commerce, information on the number of spouses of military members on active duty employed and the local chambers of commerce providing this information to the department of commerce.

(2) Funding for the campaign must be established from existing resources.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "military member on active duty" means a person who is serving on full-time active military duty in the armed forces of the United States.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 50.20 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The legislature finds that spouses of military members make great sacrifices in supporting the mission and service of their husbands and wives, including leaving jobs and careers to accompany their spouses on overseas deployment. Such sacrifices become harder when resources are not available to help these spouses transition to other job and career opportunities while living abroad.

The legislature further finds that advances in technology and the economy have created more job prospects for military spouses on deployment and that the regulations for unemployment insurance eligibility requirements should reflect these changing conditions.

(2) The legislature therefore directs the commissioner to conduct a study of the unemployment insurance program to determine what barriers to eligibility military spouses face while on deployment overseas, and to confer with the United States department of labor on what regulatory and other actions can be taken to provide greater opportunities for such persons to participate in the unemployment insurance program. The commissioner should confer with other relevant state and federal agencies that can provide relevant information on the labor market and job resources for spouses living on overseas military bases. The study should account for changing job markets and the increased opportunities to work remotely, as well as an assessment of resources available on foreign military bases that can assist persons seeking employment opportunities on base and remotely.

(3) By December 1, 2019, the commissioner must submit a report to the governor, the joint committee on veterans' and military affairs, and appropriate standing committees of the legislature, on the study and implementation of plans to increase opportunities for military spouses to participate in the unemployment insurance program. The report should include consideration of how such regulations are compatible with federal standards and whether any legislation may be required to effectively implement the plan. The study and report must be conducted within existing resources.

(4) This section expires June 30, 2019.

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