

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5849

C 192 L 17
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing the need for veterans' services.

Sponsors: Senators Angel, Bailey, Rolfes, Braun, Brown, Sheldon, Pearson, Becker, Fortunato, Wilson, Palumbo, O'Ban, Warnick and Conway.

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The state offers various programs to assist with veteran employment opportunities. For example, veterans receive a preference in state and county employment, including a scoring bonus on any competitive employment and promotion examinations. A private employer may receive a tax credit for hiring an unemployed veteran. Certain business and health professions must accept military training or experience towards licensing or certification requirements if the training and experience is substantially equivalent to the state licensing standards.

In 2013, the Governor created the Washington State Military Transition Council (Council) to develop innovative ideas to increase veteran employment opportunities by connecting state agencies with other governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, as well as the Department of Defense. The Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) serves as the chair of the Council.

The DVA administers veterans' benefits provided by the state. Some of these benefit programs include the Veterans' Assistance Program, Veterans' Innovations Program, state veterans' homes, and several housing assistance programs. The DVA provides certain services for military members and their families related to deployment and war-related conditions. Specifically, such services include direct treatment services to war-affected veterans who served in Vietnam and the Middle East, training programs for primary care professionals on war-related stress and trauma, counseling and peer-support networks for families of deployed military members, and referrals to veterans' families for mental health providers.

Summary: The Office of Financial Management (OFM) must develop a recruitment program for veterans that provides credit for knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. The OFM must consult with the DVA, the Department of Enterprise Services, the Council, the

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.

Veterans Employee Resource Group, and the stakeholders in developing the program. The program must identify and connect with existing public and private military recruitment programs, develop a system to provide veterans with experience credit for state job classes with similar military jobs, and identify better ways to utilize veterans' experiences. The OFM must report to the Legislature by January 1, 2018, with a draft plan of the military recruitment program, including draft bill language if necessary. The DVA must offer, to the extent funding is available, training and support for volunteers interested in providing peer-to-peer support for other veterans. The DVA must report to the Legislature by the end of 2018 on the effectiveness of the peer-to-peer support program. Certain DVA services for war-related conditions are changed to reference combat-related services.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2017