
**Innovation, Community & Economic
Development, & Veterans Committee**

HB 1869

Brief Description: Enacting the keeping our Washington guard strong act.

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Maycumber, Ryu, Graham, Christian, Rule, Couture, Bronoske, Slatter, Chambers, Reeves, Reed, Chapman, Ormsby, Barnard, Timmons, Sandlin, Orwall, Goodman, Caldier, Riccelli, Hackney, Shavers and Griffey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a referral bonus for a National Guard member whose successful recruitment results in an enlistment contract.
- Provides a reenlistment bonus to a National Guard member who extends his or her service for at least two years.

Hearing Date: 1/10/24

Staff: Martha Wehling (786-7067).

Background:

The State Militia.

The Washington Constitution provides for the organization of the state militia. The Governor serves as Commander-in-Chief, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints an adjutant general, who is Chief of Staff to the Governor and is the executive head of the militia.

The organized militia consists of the National Guard and the State Guard. The National Guard is the military force of Washington that is organized, equipped, and federally recognized under the National Defense Act. The Adjutant General commands the National Guard and recruits, trains,

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maintains, and administers the organized militia.

The Governor may order the organized militia into active service to execute Washington's laws or perform duties the Governor deems proper in certain circumstances or in imminent belief of those circumstances, including war, insurrection, rebellion, invasion, tumult, riot, mob, organized violence, or public disaster. The organized militia may also be ordered into active service to enforce controlled substances statutes, prepare for or recover from the specified circumstances, or when otherwise required for public health, safety, or welfare, including failure of responsible civil authorities to preserve law and order or protect life or property.

National Guard Enlistment.

National Guard enlistment must conform with the federal Department of Defense laws and regulations, which specify the term and the minimum and maximum age for original (new) recruits and reenlistment. A recruit to the National Guard must also be a United States citizen or permanent resident; meet certain educational requirements; achieve a minimum score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test; and meet certain medical, physical, and moral requirements.

Summary of Bill:

Referral Incentive Program.

A National Guard member may identify an appropriate recruitment prospect to the Military Department. If the prospect enters into an enlistment contract for entry or reentry into the National Guard, a "completed accession," the referring member may receive a referral bonus in an amount up to \$500. The Adjutant General will set the bonus amount each calendar year. Current members of the National Guard, command or senior enlisted advisors, and members with recruitment duties are ineligible for the referral program.

Reenlistment Bonus Program.

A National Guard member who extends his or her term of service is eligible for a reenlistment bonus. The amount of the bonus must encourage reenlistment for a term greater than two years. Eligibility is limited to members whose service was deemed satisfactory by the Adjutant General and who are not eligible for a federal reenlistment bonus. The Adjutant General shall establish the program, may determine additional eligibility criteria, and must specify all the criteria in policy.

The Military Department must determine and publish the bonus payment schedule. If the reenlisting member fails to complete the reenlistment term, the Military Department may seek to recover a prorated amount of the bonus.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2024.

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