
**Technology, Economic Development, &
Veterans Committee**

HB 1073

Brief Description: Keeping our Washington national guard strong act.

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Abbarno, Ryu, Shavers, Paul, Timmons, Simmons, Rule, Barnard, Nance, Reeves and Donaghy.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a Washington National Guard retention program.
- Directs the Adjutant General to study retention needs, determine eligibility criteria, and determine the amount and schedule of retention bonuses.
- Requires the Military Department to report on retention needs and recommendations every three years.

Hearing Date: 1/15/25

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

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National Defense Act and includes approximately 8,400 citizen soldiers and airmen in the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. The Adjutant General commands the National Guard and recruits, trains, 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. The National Guard is also subject to the call of the President of the United States to serve as part of the United States military.

National Guard Enlistment.

National Guard enlistment must conform with the federal Department of Defense laws and regulations, which specify the requirements for reenlistment.

Summary of Bill:

The Adjutant General is required to create a National Guard Retention Program (Program). The Program is required to study National Guard retention needs to determine the amount of any reenlistment bonus that will encourage members to extend their terms of service. Retention needs may include factors such as length of service, critical skills needed, reenlistment term, and conversion of skills.

The Adjutant General is required to determine eligibility criteria for the Program and specify the criteria in policy. Any changes to the criteria are required to be published. The Adjutant General is also required to determine the amount of any reenlistment bonus and the schedule to make bonus payments.

The Military Department is required to report to the Governor and the Legislature at least once every three years, beginning November 1, 2027, on retention needs and recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 6, 2025.

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