

SENATE BILL 1428

By Green

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;
Title 9 and Title 58, relative to grant programs for
retired veterans.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58, Chapter 3, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

58-3-1__.

(a) The department shall establish and administer a grant program to be known as the small business grant program for retired members of the United States military. The program shall be created for the purpose of providing resources to assist retired members of the United States military who own or operate a small business, or plan to own or operate a small business, in this state.

(b) The department shall utilize existing staff to assist in the implementation of the program and provide grant funding from whatever funding sources are available, including, but not limited to, funds from federal and state governments.

(c) The department shall allocate and disperse five hundred thousand (\$500,000) dollars each fiscal year to assist retired veterans in the creation of small businesses. The department shall select fifty (50) applicants and award each applicant one (1) ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) grant. The department shall place any unused portion of the money for the program in a fund to be used the following year.

(d) The department, in consultation with the department of economic and community development, shall develop policies and procedures to:

(1) Govern the selection of recipients for grants;

(2) Undertake appropriate activities to solicit grant applications from qualified applicants;

(3) Design and implement policies to assure the efficiency and effectiveness of the grant program; and

(4) Create a special committee to review applications and select the top fifty (50) applicants who are each eligible to receive one (1) ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) grant. The committee shall consist of five (5) members employed by the department and the department of economic and community development. Each year, the department shall appoint three (3) of its employees and the department of economic and community development shall appoint two (2) of its employees to serve on the special committee; provided, however, in order to stagger such terms, initial appointments shall be made as follows:

(A) One (1) member shall be appointed by the department to a term that expires on June 30, 2015;

(B) Two (2) members shall be appointed by the department of economic and community development to terms that expire on June 30, 2016; and

(C) Two (2) members shall be appointed by the department to terms that expire on June 30, 2017.

(e) The special committee shall adopt and implement a written policy related to conflicts of interest, to ensure that all members avoid any situation that creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest related to the work of the special committee. Such policy related to conflicts of interest shall be implemented within six (6) months of the final appointment of a member to the special committee.

(f) As used in this section:

(1) "Department" means the department of veterans affairs;

(2) "Program" means the small business grant program for retired members of the United States military;

(3) "Retired member of the United States military" means a retired member of the United States military or the United States military reserves in good standing who has participated in full or voluntary early retirement authorized by a branch of the United States armed forces; and

(4) "Small business" means a business entity that employs one hundred (100) or fewer full-time employees.

SECTION 2. The commissioner of the department of veterans affairs is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 3. The provisions of this act shall not be construed to be an appropriation of funds and no funds shall be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless such funds are specifically appropriated by the general appropriations act.

SECTION 4. For purposes of promulgating rules and regulations, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, and for all other purposes, this act shall take effect October 1, 2014, the public welfare requiring it.