
SENATE BILL 5772

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senator O'Ban

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing employment opportunities for
2 spouses of military members; adding a new section to chapter 73.16
3 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 43.41 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature makes the following
7 findings:

8 (a) Spouses of military members make great sacrifices in
9 supporting the mission and service of their husbands and wives,
10 including leaving jobs and careers to accompany their spouses on
11 reassignment to a different state or overseas. Such sacrifices become
12 harder when resources are not available to help these spouses
13 transition to other job and career opportunities while living in a
14 new state or abroad.

15 (b) Multiple studies affirm unequivocally higher unemployment
16 rates for military spouses than for civilian spouses. Underemployment
17 is also a serious challenge for military spouses and their families.
18 The lack of employment opportunities for military spouses create
19 stress, influence a family's decision to stay in or leave the
20 military, and is a factor that ultimately hurts military readiness,
21 retention, and recruiting.

1 (c) Advances in technology and the economy have created more job
2 prospects for military spouses on reassignment.

3 (2) The legislature intends to establish a military spouse
4 employment initiative and increase both the hiring and retention of
5 military spouses in the state workforce by using innovative workplace
6 strategies, including the use of technology to support mobile
7 workforce opportunities.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 73.16
9 RCW to read as follows:

10 (1) The department of veterans affairs, employment security
11 department, and department of commerce shall consult local chambers
12 of commerce, associate development organizations, and businesses to
13 initiate a demonstration campaign to increase military spouse
14 employment. This campaign may include partnerships with chambers of
15 commerce that result in business owners sharing, with the local
16 chamber of commerce, information on the number of military spouses
17 employed and the local chambers of commerce providing this
18 information to the department of veterans affairs.

19 (2) Participants in the campaign are encouraged to work with the
20 Washington state military transition council and county veterans'
21 advisory boards as defined in RCW 73.08.035.

22 (3) Funding for the campaign shall be established from existing
23 resources.

24 (4) For the purposes of this section, "military spouse" means any
25 person married or previously married to a military service member,
26 irrespective of the length of the marriage, during the military
27 service member's service in any branch of the United States armed
28 forces as an active duty service member, reservist, or national guard
29 member.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41
31 RCW to read as follows:

32 (1) The office shall develop a military spouse recruitment
33 program that targets military spouses and gives them credit for their
34 knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. In developing the
35 program, the office shall consult with the department of enterprise
36 services, department of veteran affairs, the state military
37 transition council, the veterans employee resource group, the
38 employment security department, and other interested stakeholders.

1 Program development must include, but is not limited to, identifying:
2 (a) Public and private military spouse recruitment programs and ways
3 those programs can be used in Washington; (b) barriers to state
4 employment and opportunities to better utilize military spouses'
5 experience; (c) opportunities within Washington state government
6 employment for mobile work, telework, and other flexible work
7 arrangements; and (d) the number of military spouses employed by the
8 state of Washington.

9 (2) For the purposes of this section, "military spouse" has the
10 same meaning as in section 2(4) of this act.

11 (3) Funding for the program must be established from existing
12 resources.

13 (4) The office shall report to the legislature with a draft plan
14 by January 1, 2020, that includes draft bill language if necessary.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) By January 31st of each year, state agencies employing one
18 thousand or more people must submit the report described in
19 subsection (2) of this section to the human resources director.

20 (2) The report must include the following information:

21 (a) The number of employees from the previous calendar year;

22 (b) The number of employees who are military spouses, as defined
23 in section 2(4) of this act; and

24 (c) Employment opportunities within the agency that can be
25 performed by agency staff who are physically located overseas or
26 outside the state of Washington.

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