



# Representative Chris Tuck

## House Minority Leader

Alaska State Legislature

District 23 - Representing Dimond Estates, Foxridge, Taku,  
Campbell, Northwood and Windemere

### Sponsor Statement House Bill 6 Employment Preference for Veterans

House Bill 6 removes barriers to employment for veterans. According to a 2012 survey of veterans from all eras, more than two-thirds of respondents considered finding a job as the greatest challenge in transitioning to civilian life.

As of June 2014, nearly 600,000 veterans were unemployed. Recent employment data from the Veterans Benefits Administration in February 2015 shows the jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans at 6.7%, with young male veterans experiencing a jobless rate of more than 18%.

The military discharges 160,000 active duty service members and approximately 110,000 reserve and National Guard service members each year. During 2013, Alaska saw over 2,000 military personnel separate from service and return home, and this number is likely to rise in the coming years given the continued force shaping efforts.

Many states are making great strides to improve veteran employment by removing professional licensing barriers and crediting military education and experience. However, employment ultimately depends on employers providing workforce opportunities.

All fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico provide a veterans preference in public employment, however, private employers are prohibited from establishing comparable business hiring policies.

House Bill 6 would allow an optional veteran hiring preference for private employers by taking advantage of an option available under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To date, seventeen states have adopted similar legislation and is supported by the United States Department of Defense.

It's time Alaska takes action by joining these other states in passing House Bill 6 to help our veterans and our small businesses.