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Sponsor Statement **House Bill 71 – Military Work Experience**

Members of the military bravely serve our nation and protect our nation's values around the world. The rigors of the battlefield can be immense, yet the transition back to civilian life often proves to be another battle. In a 2012 survey, two-thirds of veterans named finding a job as the greatest challenge in transition from military to civilian life.

House Bill 71 attempts to ease this transition by allowing veterans, former prisoners of war or members of the national guard to substitute documented military experience for published minimum qualifications for state classified positions. Numerous states, including Alaska, provide veterans hiring benefits and employment preferences; House Bill 71 would provide additional support to our veterans by allowing their previous military work experience to carry over into the civilian world.

Allowing the use of military experience for state job qualifications is currently allowed in Alaska's personnel policy. House Bill 71 would enshrine this current practice into law, ensuring those who have sacrificed for our nation will have better access to employment irrespective of changes in administrations.

I appreciate your consideration of this legislation and ask for your support in its passage.