



REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS

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Sponsor Statement HB 282

“An Act applying military education, training, and service credit to occupational licensing and certain postsecondary education requirements; and providing for a temporary occupational license for a qualified military service members.”

According to the Department of Defense, the June 2011 jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans was 13.3%, with young male Veterans (ages 18 to 24) experiencing an unemployment rate of 21.9%. Last year, Alaska had over 1200 service members separate from the military from our posts and bases. These are 1200 potential workers who could contribute to our state’s economy. It is our responsibility to assist their transition into our work force swiftly and appropriately.

Our nation’s military is one of the most highly trained in the world. These men and women who undertake this challenge face unique challenges and sacrifice many things that the general population does not. We owe it to our men and women to ensure that their distinctive set of skills do not go to waste once they separate from the military. These highly trained individuals deserve to remain productive members of society and to be able to provide for their families.

HB 282 requires the Division of Professional Licensing, University of Alaska and vocational educational facilities to examine the credentials of related military experience. Relevant military experience would be credited for licensing requirements and educational credit would be granted for appropriate training.

In the last 10 years our military has seen record numbers of deployments. HB 282 is one way we can show our thanks and allow our service members the opportunity to create positive and productive futures for themselves.

I would appreciate your support for House Bill 282.