



Representative Chris Tuck

House Majority Leader

Alaska State Legislature

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

Sponsor Statement House Bill 2 Employment Preference for Veterans

The road to employment can be difficult for veterans returning to civilian life. According to a 2012 survey of veterans from all eras, two-thirds of the veterans name finding a job as the greatest challenge in transitioning.

House Bill 2 would provide assistance to our veterans who are seeking employment opportunities by allowing an optional veteran hiring preference for private employers by taking advantage of an option available under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To date, thirty seven states have adopted similar legislation and is supported by the United States Department of Defense.

All fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico award preferences to veterans in initial hiring for public employment. However, private employers are prohibited from establishing comparable business hiring policies unless specific legislation is passed allowing this option.

As of November 2016, the National Bureau of Labor Statistics show the jobless rate for young male veterans aged 18-24 still exceed their civilian counterparts (239,000 veterans aged 18-24 were unemployed versus 159,000 of their civilian counterparts).

The military discharges 160,000 active duty service members and approximately 110,000 reserve and National Guard service members each year. According to the Defense Manpower Data Center 2015 data, over 2,000 military personnel returned to Alaska upon separation.

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.

It's time Alaska takes action by joining these other states in passing House Bill 2 to help our veterans and our small businesses.