



LETTER OF SUPPORT

January 20, 2017

Bill Number//Law Log: HB 2

Bill Sponsor: Rep. Tuck

Bill Short Title: PRIVATE EMPLOYER VOLUNTARY VET PREFERENCE

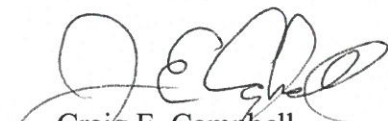
It is my understanding that Representative Tuck has introduced House Bill 2 proposing the Alaska Statutes be amended to provide a veteran hiring preference be allowed when hiring an employee.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense program established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. As a volunteer based organization, ESGR focuses on advocating for National Guard and Reservists ability to be successful military service members, while concurrently pursuing civilian employment opportunities. ESGR is supported by a network of more than 4,500 volunteers in 54 committees located across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam-Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In Alaska, our committee has been very active in advocating for strong civilian/military relationships, highlighted this past year by the nomination and selection of Alaska Airlines as one of fifteen companies nationwide to receive the Secretary of Defense "Freedom Award." The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of employees serving in the Guard and Reserve.

In reference to House Bill 2, the Alaska State Committee supports efforts by our state government to strengthen a positive relationship between Alaskan civilian employees and Alaskan residents who serve in our reserve components. We understand the proposed legislation is not mandatory of the private sector to provide a veteran's preference, but the tenure of the legislation shows a strong interest by our state officials to support hiring veterans in our state. This is a very positive message!

We would ask that members of the state legislature support House Bill 2. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Alaskan military service members.



Craig E. Campbell
Alaska State Chair

NFIB

The Voice of Small Business.®

ALASKA

January 23, 2017

The Honorable Chris Tuck
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: House Bill 2

Dear Representative Tuck:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I wish to respectfully share our support for House Bill 2. The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska.

House Bill 2 would allow an optional veteran hiring preference for private employers by taking advantage of an option available under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Small businesses in Alaska respect and support the many veterans who have chosen to make Alaska their home. We would appreciate the voluntary option to offer a preference to veterans in hiring.

Sincerely yours,



Dennis L. DeWitt
Alaska State Director

Cc: NFIB/AK Leadership Council



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

January 11, 2017

The Honorable Chris Tuck
Majority Leader
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 204
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Majority Leader Tuck,

On behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy, I want to thank you for your support of Service members in private sector hiring, as evidenced by your sponsorship of House Bill 2 (HB2) in the 2017 Alaska legislative session. This key Department of Defense issue for 2017 simply allows employers to offer a hiring preference to veterans, without fear of unanticipated discrimination allegations or related legal issues, and imposes no requirement upon private sector employers to implement such a policy.

This effort can assist private sector employers seeking to hire Service members who move back to Alaska upon completing their military service. It will legally allow employers to give hiring preferences to veterans and greatly assist in their transition to civilian life. Because state and local governments already offer this hiring preference, the change would also allow some measure of balance between the private and public sector when competing for veteran talent. If the policy change, as represented in HB2 is successful, Alaska will join 37 other states already providing this help to transitioning veterans.

According to the Defense Manpower Data Center 2015 data, over 2,000 military personnel returned to Alaska upon separation, and we believe that the number separating is likely to remain steady in the near future. As of November 2016, national Bureau of Labor statistics show the jobless rate for young male veterans aged 18-24 still exceeded their civilian counterparts (239,000 veterans aged 18-24 were unemployed versus 159,000 of their civilian counterparts). Enactment of this policy is another positive step towards reducing the number left unemployed.

We greatly appreciate that the Alaska legislature has been a champion in addressing our key military family quality of life issues for the past ten years. As always, Mark San Souci, our Northwest Regional Liaison, stands ready to support where he can. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 571.372.5321 or Mark at 571.309.4622, mark.b.sansouci.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,



Marcus J. Beauregard
Director, Defense State Liaison Office