HB

6

<TARGET><BILL>HB 6</BILL><SUBJECT>HB 6</SUBJECT><COMM>SSTA29</COMM></TARGET>

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 4/15/15

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 9/17/15

State Affairs Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 6(MLV)

HB 6-PRIV EMPLOYER VOLUNTARY VET PREFERENCE

"An Act relating to a voluntary preference for veterans by private employers."

and recommends:

[ ] be **replaced** with **SCS** _____ (_____) *[ ] Same Title [ ] Technical Title Change [ ] New Title/SCR No._____*

[ ] adopt **previous SCS** _____ (_____) *[ ] Same Title [ ] Technical Title Change [ ] New Title/SCR No._____*

[ ] attached amendment(s)

[ ] adopt _____Letter of Intent

[ ] further referral to _____Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LWF
CED	LAW
COR	LEG
EED	MVA
DEC	DNR
DFG	DPS
GOV	REV
DHS	DOT
AJS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
GOV			✓	1
LWF			✓	2

[ ] **APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note**

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Coghill	✓			
	Huggins	✓			
	Wielechowski	✓			
CHAIR:	Stoltze	✓			

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senator Bill Stoltze, Chair
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone (907) 465-4958
Fax (907) 465- 4928

Official Business

Members:
Sen. John Coghill, Vice Chair
Sen. Charlie Huggins
Sen. Lesil McGuire
Sen. Bill Wielechowski

April 17, 2015
Bill Packet Information

HB 6 PRIV EMPLOYER VOLUNTARY VET PREFERENCE

- Sponsor Statement
- Sectional Analysis by Sponsor
- Summary of Changes from version "H" to version "P"
- HB 6 – CS(MLV) version "P"
- HB 6 – Initial Version "H"
- Fiscal Note:
  - #1 – OOG-HRC 3-20-15 (**Zero**)
  - #2 – DOLWD-CO 3-20-15 (**Zero**)
- Supporting Documents:
  - Report by Prudential Financial on Veterans Employment Challenges
  - NCSL Legisbrief – Giving Veterans Hiring Preference
  - NCSL 2015 Update – Giving veterans Hiring Preference
  - Letter – Department of Defense 1-22-2015
  - Document – DoD Veteran Hire Protection
  - Document – DoD Best Practices Report
  - Article – AK Business Monthly Op-Ed: Hiring Military Veterans is Good Business 2-30-2011
- Letters of Support:
  - Email Dixie Banner 3-19-2015
  - Email Cpt. Bob Pawlowski 3-20-2015

<Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled>

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.

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Representative Chris Tuck

House Minority Leader

Alaska State Legislature

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

Sectional Analysis for CS House Bill 6 (MLV)

Short Title: Employment Preference for Veterans

Section 1: Clarifies that nothing in AS 18.80, a chapter protecting persons from various types of unlawful discrimination, is intended to prohibit a private employer from granting an employment preference to a veteran.

Section 2: Establishes that employers may grant an employment preference to a veteran.

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MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2015

TO: **Senator Bill Stoltze**
Chair, State Affairs Committee

FROM: **Rep. Chris Tuck**
House Minority Leader

SUBJ: **Summary of Changes to CS HB 6 (MLV)**

Two changes took effect from version H to Committee Substitute House Bill 6 (MLV), version P:

- In response to advice from legislative legal we removed language referring to spouses and domestic partners as being included for an optional hiring preference based on the Human Rights Commission Statutes (AS 18.80) which states we cannot discriminate based on marital status. It was the opinion of legislative legal that if we were to extend the hiring preference to spouses this bill would be in violation of the Human Rights Act.

- The second change is an oversight during the drafting process where the Alaska National Guard had been left off the list of service members able to participate in the hiring preference. The inclusive definition of veteran includes the US Armed Forces of the United States, a reserve unit of the armed forces, the Alaska Territorial Guard, Alaska Army and Air National Guard, and the Alaska Naval Militia. This is a standard definition used in other statutes.

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Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	CSHB 6(MLV)
Fiscal Note Number:	1
(H) Publish Date:	3/20/2015

Identifier: HB006-OOG-HRC-3-13-2015
Title: EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE FOR VETS & SPOUSES
Sponsor: TUCK
Requester: House State Affairs

Department: Office of the Governor
Appropriation: Commissions/Special Offices
Allocation: Human Rights Commission
OMB Component Number: 1

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**FY 2016**	**FY 2016**	**FY 2017**	**FY 2018**	**FY 2019**	**FY 2020**	**FY 2021**
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency?
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Initial version

Prepared By:	Guy Bell, Director	Phone:	(907)465-3876
Division:	Administrative Services	Date:	03/13/2015 04:00 PM
Approved By:	Paula M. Haley, Executive Director	Date:	03/13/15
Agency:	Alaska Human Rights Commission		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Analysis

This bill will allow a private employer to grant an employment preference to a veteran, or to a spouse or domestic partner of a veteran, when hiring an employee.

The Commission does not anticipate any fiscal impact if this bill were to become law.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	CSHB 6(MLV)
Fiscal Note Number:	2
(H) Publish Date:	3/20/2015

Identifier: HB006-DOLWD-CO-03-13-15
Title: EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE FOR VETS & SPOUSES
Sponsor: TUCK
Requester: House Military & Veterans' Affairs

Department: Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Appropriation: Commissioner and Administrative Services
Allocation: Commissioner's Office
OMB Component Number: 340

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**FY 2016**	**FY 2016**	**FY 2017**	**FY 2018**	**FY 2019**	**FY 2020**	**FY 2021**
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Fund Source (Operating Only)							
None							
Total	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Positions							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							
Change in Revenues							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared By: Anna Latham, Special Assistant to the Commissioner I — Phone: (907)465-4531
Division: Commissioner's Office — Date: 03/13/2015 01:04 PM
Approved By: Heidi Drygas, Commissioner — Date: 03/13/15
Agency: Department of Labor and Workforce Development

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Analysis

This bill adds definitions for "domestic partner" and "veteran" in Alaska Statutes 18 and 23. This bill allows private employers to grant an employment preference to a veteran, or to a spouse or domestic partner of a veteran, when hiring an employee.

There is no fiscal impact to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development anticipated as a result of this legislation.

VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

Perceptions and experiences of transitioning from military to civilian life

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA

Prudential

Bring Your Challenges

Foreword

With tens of thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans returning from service and looking to start new careers in a challenging economic environment, the nation is focused more than ever on helping veterans transition into civilian careers.

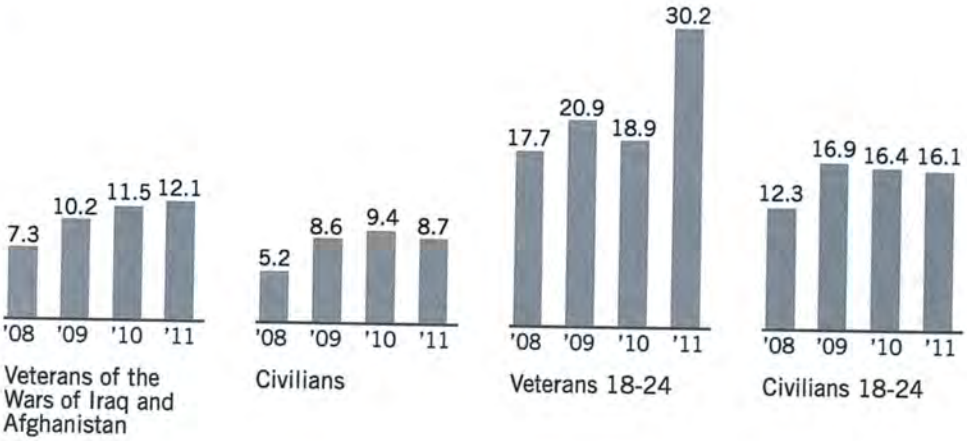
Veterans offer a unique set of skills, experiences and leadership abilities developed and honed during their years in the military and in the crucible of combat, yet unemployment rates highlight the difficulties returning veterans are facing in their search for new careers.

Working with the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America organization, Prudential conducted this survey to better understand veterans' experiences and perceptions around finding civilian careers. While veterans of all age groups were included in the sample, the large majority, and the focus of this research, are post-9/11 or Gulf War-era II veterans.

By shining a light on veterans' transition experience, this research serves as a source of actionable information for the range of programs—military, nonprofit and private sector—that support the goal of putting veterans on the path to employment, and ensuring that as a nation we continue to benefit from all that service members have to offer in their new careers.

Unemployment Rate *Total annual average percentage*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



For more detail on the methodology and respondent profile, please see page 10.

Summary

1. **Two-thirds of veterans experienced a difficult transition from military to civilian life.**
   Close to half did not feel ready to transition. Difficulties are largely attributed to unemployment and health challenges, but also to the need for time to "figure out what's next" or decompress after their service.

2. **Veterans name "finding a job" as the greatest challenge in transitioning, with transferring military skills to a civilian environment a major hurdle.**
   Aside from the difficulties of the current job market, one of the greatest challenges veterans report in finding a job is explaining how their military skills translate to the civilian workforce. Nearly all believe they have the skills needed to land their ideal job, but the majority express concerns about how to translate their skills to a business environment.

3. **Most feel their military service is respected by employers, but three in five veterans express concerns about cultural barriers.**
   Half are specifically concerned about employers not understanding military culture. Employed veterans are more likely to feel valued, while unemployed veterans are more likely to believe their experience is not respected nor understood by employers.

4. **Two-thirds say they are facing a health challenge as a result of their military service.**
   Veterans who report a physical or mental health challenge have had more difficult transitions, show the highest need for support, and report greater employment concerns.

5. **Not all veterans received support or training for transitioning to the civilian workforce.**
   Two-thirds said they received transition support. The primary source was the Transition Assistance Program, which less than half found effective.

6. **About one in five veterans surveyed are unemployed and currently seeking employment.**
   Most job seekers say they are prepared to search for a job, but nearly just as many say they need more help with multiple job search skills. Veterans report that they need the most help with networking.

7. **Job seekers report using multiple resources for trying to find employment, but show great interest in additional tools.**
   Interest is high in new transition programs or services customized for veterans, which close to three-quarters view as being important to their success.

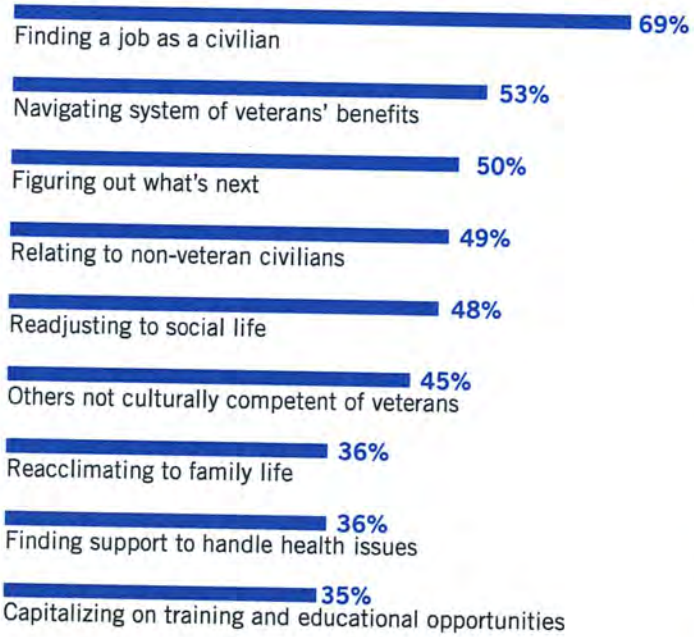
8. **There are high expectations for employer-provided support programs for veterans.**
   Veterans are looking to employers to not only nurture their career, but also support their transition to civilian life and accommodate any health challenges they might be facing.

Challenges Faced in Transition to Civilian Life

The majority of veterans describe their transition to civilian life as difficult, and name "finding a job" the greatest challenge

- Overall, 64% of respondents said they had a difficult transition from military service to civilian life. Difficulty is largely attributed to employment challenges. In fact, 86% of unemployed veterans said their experience was difficult, versus 53% of employed veterans.
- More than two-thirds of veterans consider "finding a job" as the greatest challenge in transitioning to civilian life (69%). Not surprisingly, most unemployed veterans report this as their greatest challenge (89%).
- The next greatest challenge for veterans is navigating the benefit and support system for veterans (53%), followed closely by the basic transitional steps of "figuring out what's next" (50%) and readjusting to their social lives outside of the military (48%).
- Reservists and National Guardsmen, who are more accustomed to going on and off duty, rate their challenges similar to veterans not affiliated with the Reserve Component.

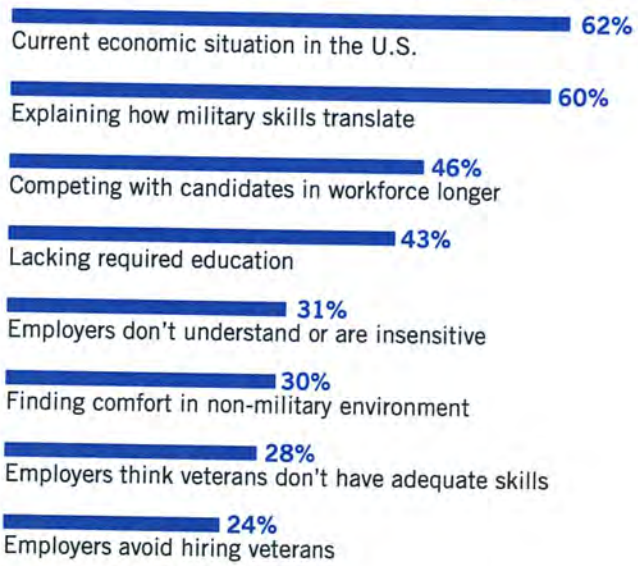
Greatest challenges in TRANSITIONING to civilian life



Translating military skills to civilian work is viewed as a roadblock to finding a job

- When asked about their greatest challenge in finding a job, veterans point to "the current economic situation in the U.S." as the number one obstacle—recognizing that this macroeconomic issue magnifies the unique challenges that they are already facing.
- The next biggest challenge veterans name is explaining how their military experience translates to skills of interest to a civilian employer (60%). This is a consistent theme throughout the study in terms of being a barrier to employment.
- Veterans also see practical hurdles, such as "competing with candidates who have been in the workforce longer than me" (46%) and a lack of education (43%).
- Close to one in four believe that employers simply avoid hiring veterans (24%)—primarily due to concerns about multiple deployments or military training and time commitments of the Reserve Component, and fears of dealing with veterans' disabilities or "too much baggage."
- Virtually all veterans cite at least one challenge in seeking employment (98%), and two-thirds name three or more challenges (68%).

Greatest challenges in FINDING a job



Close to half of veterans did not feel ready to transition from military service

- About half of veterans said they felt ready to transition to civilian life (56%), leaving close to half who were not (44%).
- Readiness to transition increases with education, but not necessarily by age. More significant is the presence of a health challenge. Veterans facing physical or mental health issues are twice as likely as healthy veterans to say they were "not ready" to transition (53% vs. 28%, respectively).
- Veterans deployed six or more times were somewhat less ready than their peers who had fewer deployments (52% vs. 43%). Role in service also has some impact—with the least ready from combat arms, protective services, and transportation, and the most ready from electronics, engineering, and administrative backgrounds.
- Veterans who stated they were "not ready" to transition generally reported higher transition concerns, were less prepared to search for a job, and were less likely to be employed.

Veterans who felt ready to transition to the civilian workforce

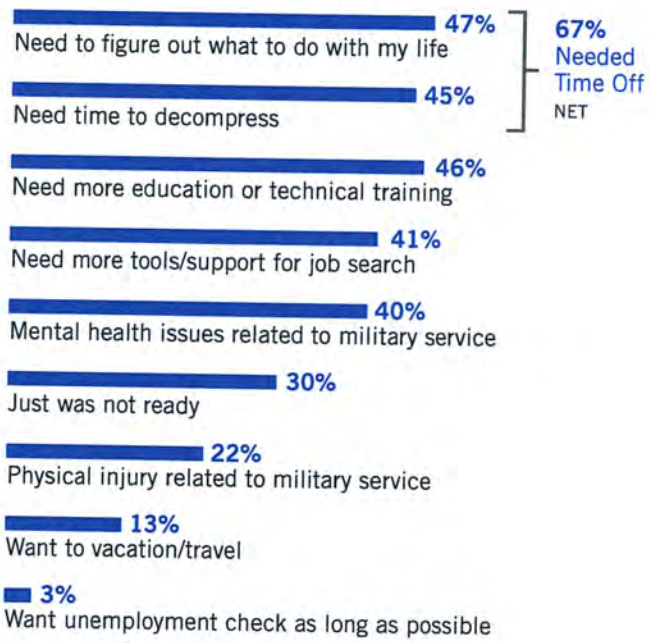
Ease of transition to civilian life

Those not ready to transition want and need time to decompress

- Among veterans who did not feel ready to transition, two-thirds indicated that they needed time to figure out what's next or simply time to decompress.
- Close to half said they need more education, with younger veterans showing more of a need.
- Close to half also point to physical (22%) and/or mental (40%) health challenges as the reason for why they did not feel ready.
- Among those who did feel ready, 48% of respondents stated that family played a leading role in supporting their transition. Work experience prior to active duty was also considered helpful in their transition (39%), and is remarkably higher among veterans who served in the Reserve Component (50%).

Why veterans don't feel ready for transition

Among veterans "not ready" to transition.

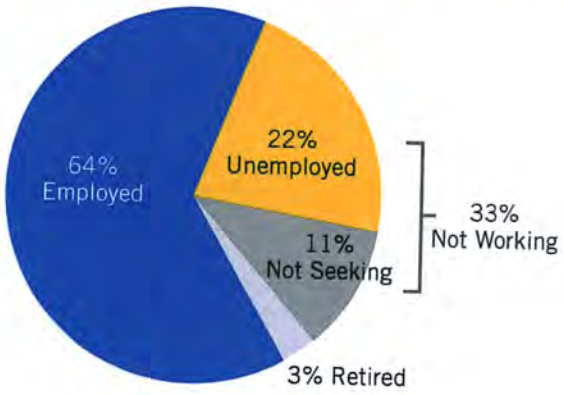


Perceived and Experienced Barriers to Employment

One in five veterans are unemployed

- Among the veterans surveyed, 64% are currently employed and 3% are retired. Meanwhile, 33% reported that they are not working, which includes a segment of veterans who are not seeking employment (11%), and those who are unemployed and seeking employment (22%).
- Employment varies by segment, with one of the most pronounced differences being by education—76% with an advanced degree are employed, versus 50% with a high school degree.
- Among those not seeking employment, 70% said they are students, 39% are disabled or focusing on rehabilitation, and 20% are frustrated or discouraged by the economy.
- Active-duty service members who expect to separate from the military within the year give similar reasons for not seeking employment, but the most popular reason was that they plan to wait until they are officially separated.

Veterans' self-reported employment status



Education is a priority for many

- 44% of veterans reported that they are either a full-time (30%) or part-time (14%) student. Among these students, two-thirds say they are using the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- The student population rises among the unemployed (53%) and not seeking (70%) segments, both of which were more likely to name "lacking education" as a barrier to employment.
- Veterans have high educational aspirations; among those who only have a high school degree, three-quarters hope to achieve a college degree or more (74%).

Health challenges are pervasive and often lead to a more difficult transition

- In total, 65% of respondents reported that they are experiencing some kind of physical or mental health challenge as a result of their military service:

  Physically disabled (33%)
  Recovering from injury (19%)
  Post-traumatic stress disorder (33%)
  Other psychological stress (31%)

- Data show that veterans with a health challenge have had more difficulty in transitioning to civilian life, including employment challenges:

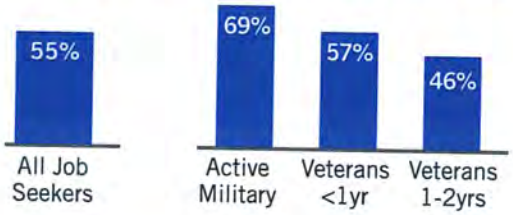
Impact of health challenges

Veterans with...	*Health Challenge*	***NO** Health Challenge*
Difficult transition	72%	48%
"Not ready" to transition	53%	28%
Unemployed	23%	18%
Household income <$50K	53%	40%

Most believe they have the skills to land a job, but expectations and readiness to search vary

- Nine in 10 job seekers believe they "definitely" (55%) or "somewhat" (35%) have the skills needed to land their ideal job. Veterans point to skills learned in the military that can be transferred to a civilian job—such as problem solving, leadership, ethics, and time management. Although less frequently, they also cite specific skills, such as information technology, health care, mechanical, and aviation.
- Nearly all job seekers feel prepared to search for a job (91%), with half "very prepared" (49%). Expectations and preparedness increase somewhat with age but more so with education.
- Active-duty service members are more confident than veterans in their skills and potential.

Job seekers who "definitely" believe they have the skills needed to land their ideal job



Perceptions of respect and appreciation waver by experience

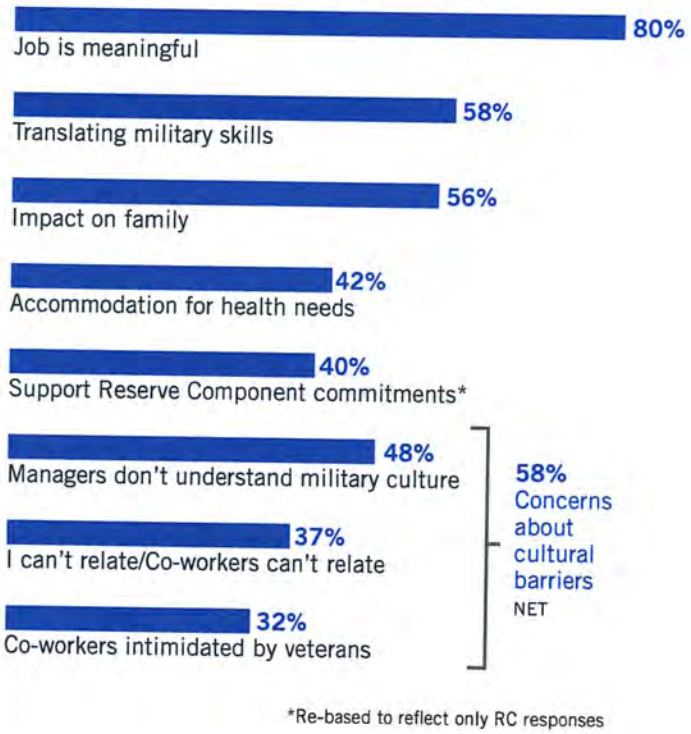
- The majority feel their military service is respected by employers (71%), but fewer believe their skills and training are appreciated by employers (56%). Negative experiences drive lower perceptions on both counts.
- Active-duty service members are more likely to feel their service is respected and appreciated by employers.

Perceived respect and appreciation of employers

Veterans express unique concerns about finding employment

- Veterans are most concerned about finding a job that is meaningful to them. After that, three in five worry about how to translate their military skills to a business environment (58%).
- Other high concerns include impact on family, accommodation for health needs, and support for any Reserve commitments they may have. So not only do they face anxiety about finding a job, but finding the right job.
- Half worry that non-veteran managers do not understand military culture (48%), and about a third feel non-veteran co-workers are intimidated by veterans (32%) or that they won't be able to relate (37%). These concerns are significantly higher among those "not ready" to transition.

Concerns when looking for employment



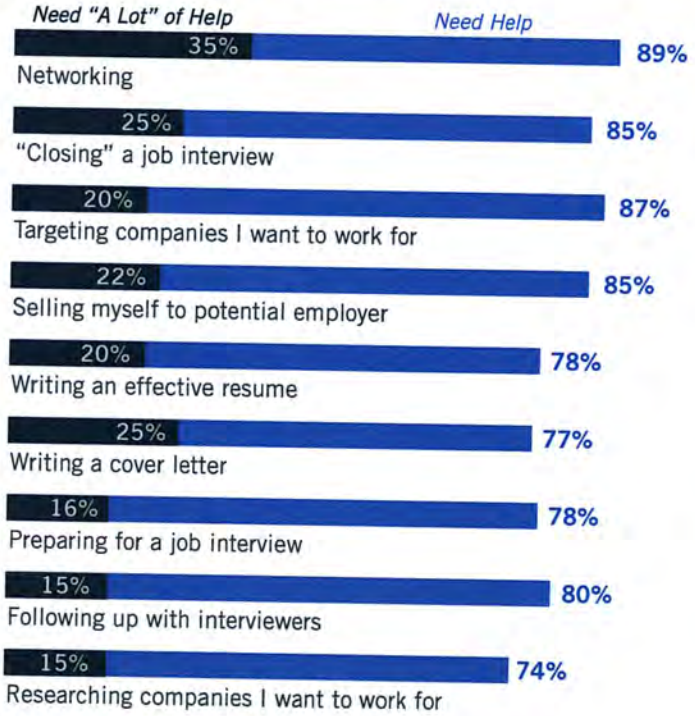
*Re-based to reflect only RC responses

Gaps and Opportunities for Support Programs

Job seekers are using multiple resources, but still say they need more help

- Overall, current unemployed job seekers report fairly high rates of using "job search" resources. Nearly half say they have used 10 or more resources (45%) in their job search, while just 8% have used less than five.
- Online services (91%), newspapers (72%), registering with online job boards (68%), and attending career fairs (61%) are among the most used.
- When probed on specific job search tasks, a large majority say they need help. On average, one in five confess to needing "a lot" of help. This includes help with resume writing, interview skills, and targeting the companies where they'd like to work. Veterans say they need the most help, however, with networking.
- Most job seekers believe in-person networking to be an effective tool (70%). Online networking, through either professional sites (52%) or social network sites (35%), follow in perceived effectiveness. Actual usage of these networking resources is lower than their perceived effectiveness.

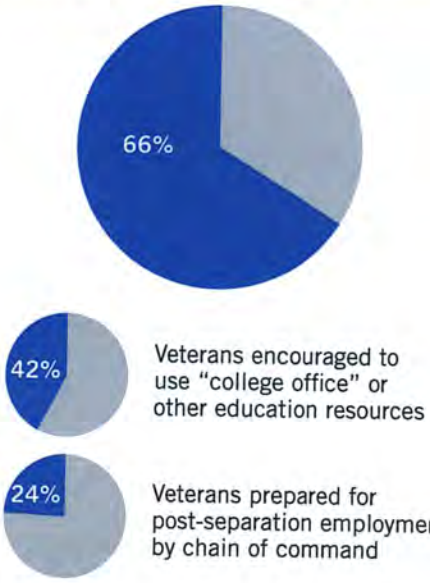
Specific needs of job seekers



Not all veterans received transition support; those who did had mixed experiences

- Overall, 66% of veterans indicated that they received some kind of support or training for transitioning to the civilian workforce—leaving a third (34%) who did not get any at all. Army veterans were almost twice as likely to not get training compared to Navy and Marines (41% vs. 22%).
- Only one-quarter said their chain of command prepared them for post-separation employment (24%), and four in 10 said they were encouraged to use the base/post command "college office" or educational resources (42%).
- The range of training is limited. While 55% of veterans attended a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) seminar, only 10% relied on a college career center, 7% used state or local government support programs, and 6% used the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) program.
- TAP seminar attendees gave the program lukewarm ratings, with less than half saying it helped them successfully reintegrate to civilian life (48%) or provided valuable employment assistance (48%).

Veterans who report receiving training or support for transitioning to civilian life



Veterans express strong interest in potential customized programs

- When presented ideas for additional programs or services customized for veterans, receptivity was high across the board. Generally speaking, receptivity was higher among the youngest veterans.
- More than half (53%) would be "very likely" to use a program that provided assistance in translating military skills to their civilian equivalents, which correlates with the high number of veterans naming this as a particularly challenging task.
- On average, in considering the ideas presented, close to three-quarters viewed potential programs as being important to their success.
- Overall, the data reveal that respondents would want and appreciate any additional help they can get.

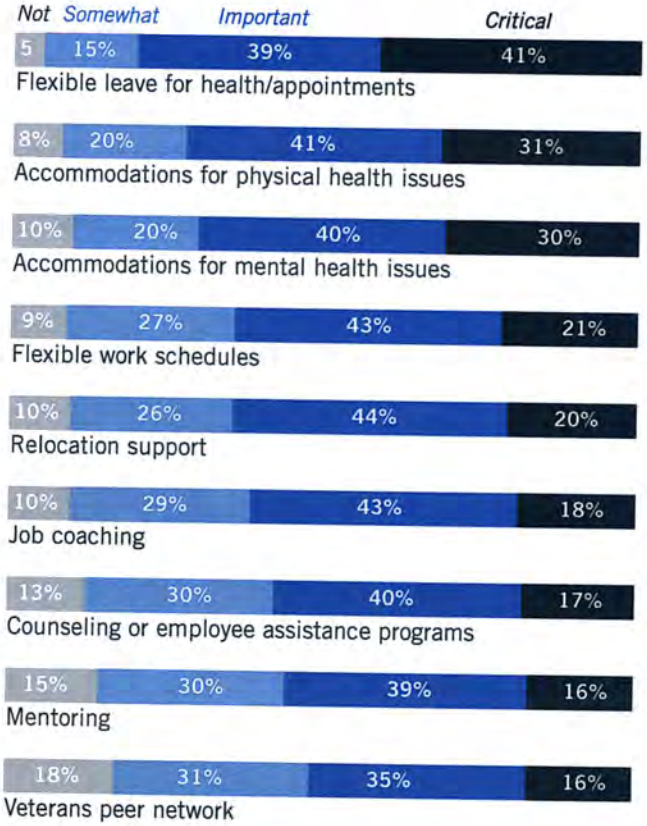
Veterans' reactions to potential new programs

	Very likely to use	*Important to success*
A job bank targeted for veterans	**61%**	**78%**
Better access to college education, or technical training	**54%**	**79%**
Assistance in translating military skills to civilian equivalents	**53%**	**79%**
A program to help place veterans in internships	**51%**	**73%**
A program to help fund business dress, travel, relocation	**51%**	**62%**
Resume, cover letter and interviewing skills workshops	**50%**	**80%**
One-on-one career counseling	**47%**	**70%**
Certification and licensing translation counseling	**46%**	**72%**
A mentorship program with veteran mentors	**45%**	**69%**
A program to develop networking skills	**39%**	**67%**

Veterans have high expectations for employer-provided support programs

- Eight in 10 respondents feel it is important for employers to provide flexible leave for the health issues that veterans face (80%). This view is even higher among veterans who are actually facing a physical or mental health challenge (86%).
- Approximately two-thirds rated employer-provided veteran support programs as "critical" or "important" to their success. Few name any of the employer-provided support programs as "not so important."
- Veterans are looking for employers to provide career opportunities, but also health and transition support. So to be considered a veteran-friendly corporation, at least some of these benefits and support services may need to exist.

Importance of employer-provided veteran support programs



About the Study

Research Objectives

This study explores the employment challenges faced by veterans. Specifically, the research was designed to gather insights on:

1. The challenges veterans face in transitioning from military to civilian life,
2. The perceived and experienced barriers to employment, and
3. Any gaps and opportunities that might exist for new or improved veteran support programs

Methodology

Prudential's study *Veterans' Employment Challenges* polled 2,453 veterans and soon-to-be veterans in an online survey from December 12, 2011, through January 23, 2012. The margin of error is ± 1.98%, at the 95% confidence level.

The study was designed to be inclusive of veterans from all service eras who met the following criteria:

- Veterans or Reserve Components who are inactive, individual ready reserve, inactive duty for training, or active duty operational support; or
- Active military or Reserve Components who plan to retire or separate from active duty within a year

Sampling

There are an estimated 21.6 million men and women in the United States who are veterans—individuals who have previously served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and who are now civilians. While this study accepted a spectrum of veterans from all service eras, it should be noted that the sample was designed to weigh heavily on a sub-segment of the veteran population having served since 2001, also known as Gulf War-era II veterans, who are 2.4 million (11%) of the veteran population.*

The study's participants came from two sample sources:

- 1,018 surveys were completed by members of the e-Rewards Panel, which allowed for gathering a random sample of all veterans who met the criteria. (e-Rewards, Inc. is a global leader in digital data collection.)
- 1,435 surveys were completed by members of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America organization (IAVA). Partnering with the IAVA allowed for precisely targeting Gulf War-era II veterans.

After initial analysis, it was clear that, over the generations, veterans have indeed faced significant and common challenges in their reintegration to civilian life. The new generation of veterans, however, expressed higher concerns and greater challenges in their transition.

As such, this report was designed to focus on the 1,845 respondents who are Gulf War-era II veterans who served missions in the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan, such as Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, and Operation New Dawn.

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey.*

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the nation's first and largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the lives of our newest veterans and their families. Through providing innovative health, education, employment and community programs, IAVA strives to build an empowered generation of veterans who provide sustainable leadership for our country and their local communities. Learn more, get involved and join the over 200,000 Member Veterans and Civilian Supporters now at www.IAVA.org.

Profile of respondents

Quotas were set to monitor for age, race, and gender against U.S. Census Bureau data as well as Department of Defense service member tracking data. All other segments fell out naturally from the random sampling.

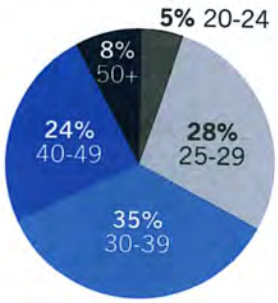
Half of the respondents represent veterans or active-duty service members who serve(d) in the Reserve Component (49%).

Below is a breakdown of the demographics of the 1,845 Gulf War-era II veterans included in this analysis.

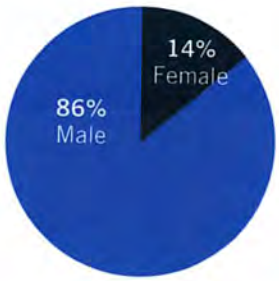
Overall Makeup of Sample

89% Veterans **11%** Active

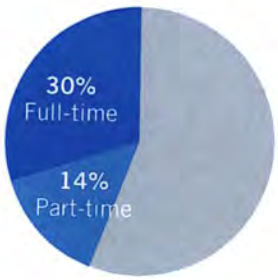
Age



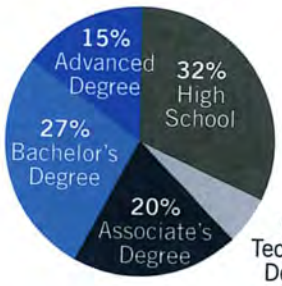
Gender



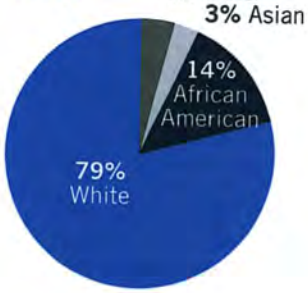
Student



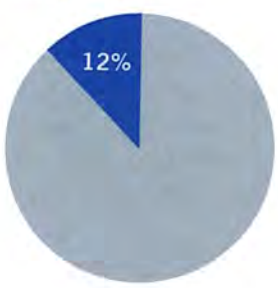
Education Completed



Race



Hispanic



This study provides new data that underscores the challenges many veterans face when transitioning to civilian careers.

It shows that while many veterans need some time after deployment to help them transition and take the next steps in their lives, getting the job they want in the current economic environment is their primary challenge. Military-related health challenges also have an impact on veterans' transition experience and their expectations of employer support.

Veterans surveyed view current training and transition support programs as not meeting their needs in many cases. Almost all are looking for or would value additional veteran support programs to help them transition back to civilian life, get them on the path to new careers, and assist them in translating their military skills into civilian roles.

Against this backdrop, among the many possible steps that could be considered to enhance veterans' transition experience, following are four ideas that may help address issues identified in this research:

- Build on existing training programs that help address the work experience and education gaps that may hinder younger veterans' transition into new careers.
- Strengthen existing programs or create new ones that focus on coaching veterans and hiring managers about how military skills relate or can be explained and adapted for civilian careers.
- Provide hiring managers with tools and education to help them understand the value proposition of veterans in the workforce and the benefit of developing and fostering veteran employee communities within an organization.
- Create job search "boot camps" that go beyond resume-writing to include interview skills, networking, and career/job research and sourcing techniques.

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Prudential
Bring Your Challenges

National Conference of State Legislatures

LEGISBRIEF

BRIEFING PAPERS ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY

DECEMBER 2013

VOL. 21, NO. 46

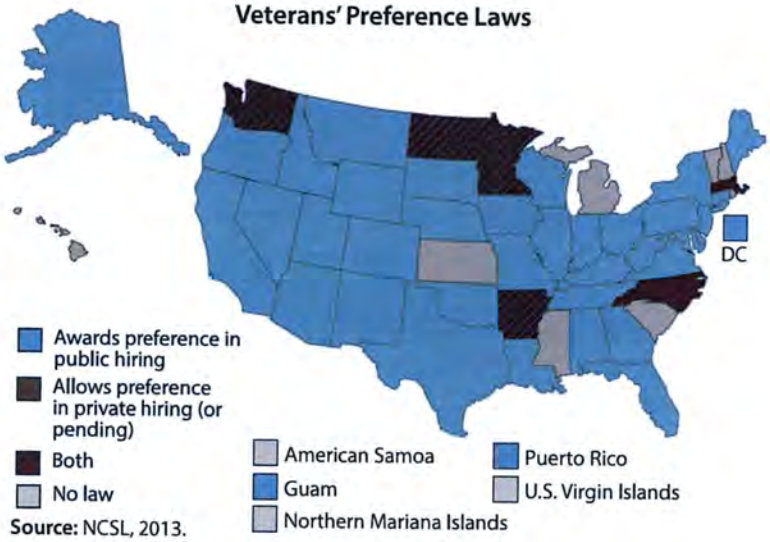
Giving Veterans Hiring Preference

By Jennifer Schultz

Veterans offer a unique set of skills, experiences and leadership abilities developed and honed during their years of military service, yet unemployment rates for veterans remain high. The jobless rate for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan increased to 10 percent in October 2013, significantly higher than the national average of 7.3 percent. Today, more than 750,000 veterans are looking for work.

The road to employment can be difficult for veterans returning to civilian life due to difficulties with identifying transferable skills, self-marketing and cultural barriers, among others. According to a 2012 survey of veterans from all eras, 64 percent of respondents said they had a difficult transition from military service to civilian life, attributed largely to employment challenges.

Veterans' Preference Laws



Source: NCSL, 2013.

The military discharges approximately 160,000 active duty service members and approximately 110,000 Reserve and National Guard service members each year, according to U.S. Department of Labor estimates. With more and more veterans returning home, state legislatures are more focused than ever on easing these veterans' transition to civilian jobs in both the public and private sectors. One policy many states have embraced provides a uniform method by which special consideration is given to qualified veterans seeking employment. Veterans' preference laws recognize the sacrifices and experiences of those serving in the Armed Forces by helping position them more competitively in the hiring process.

Did You Know?

- Ten percent of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan were unemployed in October 2013.
- One of the greatest challenges veterans face in finding employment is explaining how their military skills translate to the civilian workforce.
- Forty states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico award preference to veterans in public employment, while four states allow private employers to voluntarily give preference to veterans.

State Action

Forty states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico award preference to veterans in initial hiring for public positions, usually by adding points to examination scores that determine the relative ranking of candidates. At least 21 states and Puerto Rico extend those preferences to internal actions such as promotions, transfers and retentions. Disabled veterans and prisoners of war are awarded preference points in 36 states, the District of Columbia and Guam. Members of the National Guard are awarded preference in 12 states.

National Conference of State Legislatures

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While eligibility requirements vary by state, most award preference to honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who served on active duty. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia require veterans claiming preference to have served for a specified period of time, and 17 states and Guam require state residency. In 25 states and the District of Columbia, the spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran may be entitled to preference points. Laws in 21 states are enforced with civil penalties or extend a right of appeal to veterans who believe preference was wrongfully withheld.

While the majority of states grant some form of employment preference to veterans in the public sector, private employers have been hesitant to favor veterans due to long-standing federal laws that prohibit discrimination in hiring. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits veterans' preference in employment as unlawfully discriminatory due to the potential disparate impact on women. However, Section 11 of the act allows special rights or preferences to be granted to veterans as long as they are authorized under federal, state or local law. To date, four states—Arkansas, Minnesota, North Dakota and Washington—allow private employers to voluntarily give preference to veterans when making hiring decisions. Legislation is currently pending in Massachusetts and North Carolina.

Washington was the first state to pass a permissive veterans' preference law in 2011. HB 1432 allows private, nonpublic employers to award a voluntary preference to veterans, surviving spouses and spouses of disabled veterans. Laws in Minnesota and North Dakota contain similar language. Arkansas' legislation requires participating employers to apply a preference policy uniformly when hiring, promoting or retaining veterans, surviving spouses and spouses of disabled veterans. The law also requires the state to maintain a registry of employers that adopt a veterans' preference policy, which advocates say will give veterans a valuable tool to identify prospective employers.

At least 12 states and the District of Columbia provide tax credits to encourage private employers to hire veterans. Employers typically may claim the tax credit for the first and second taxable year in which they employ one or more qualified veterans. Credits range from $1,000 to $5,000 for each veteran hired. In 2013, 58 bills were introduced on this topic in 20 states, though only Mississippi enacted legislation this year.

Federal Action

The federal government has given veterans some degree of preference in employment since the end of the Civil War. The policy in its present form stems from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, which is now codified in Title 5 of the United States Code. Under the law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during specified periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-veterans both in hiring and retention. Preference points (either five or 10) are added to passing grades earned in entrance examinations.

In 2011, President Obama challenged the private sector to hire or train 100,000 unemployed veterans and their spouses by the end of 2013. In April of this year, the administration announced that businesses had already hired or trained 290,000 veterans and military spouses. The first lady, as part of her initiative Joining Forces, announced new commitments from private companies to hire a combined 435,000 veterans over the next five years.

NCSL Contact and Resources

Jennifer Schultz
NCSL—Denver
(303) 856-1353

NCSL Military and Veterans' Affairs webpage

NCSL Military and Veterans' Affairs Legislation Database

The information contained in this LegisBrief does not necessarily reflect NCSL policy.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

Update: Giving Veterans Hiring Preference

March 2015

Veterans' Preference in Public Employment

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico award preference to veterans in initial hiring for public positions, usually by adding points to examination scores that determine the relative ranking of candidates.

Voluntary Veterans' Preference in Private Employment

Since NCSL's LegisBrief was published in December 2013, 13 more states have enacted legislation allowing private employers to give preference in hiring to honorably discharged veterans. Many of the laws also apply to spouses of disabled veterans and surviving spouses. This brings the total to 17 states (see chart below).

2015 legislation is pending in 14 states: Alabama (SB 269/SB 270), Alaska (HB 6/SB 2), Arizona (HB 2094), California (AB 1383), Connecticut (HB 6373), Illinois (HB 3122), Indiana (SB 298/HB 1159/HB 1530), Kansas (HB 2154), Nevada (AB 89), New Hampshire (SB 55), New York (SB 4326), Oklahoma (SB 195/HB 1752), Tennessee (SB 403/HB 804) and Texas (HB 3547/SB 1713).

Private Hiring Preference – Enacted Legislation (17)

State	Bill Number	Year
Arkansas	HB 1575	2013
Florida	HB 7015	2014
Idaho	SB 1316	2014
Iowa	SB 303	2014
Kentucky	HB 164 (To Governor)	2015
Maine	SB 735	2014
Massachusetts	SB 2052	2014
Michigan	HB 5418	2014
Minnesota	SB 1599	2012
Montana	SB 196 (To Governor)	2015
Nebraska	LB 272	2015
North Dakota	SB 2127	2013
Oregon	HB 4023	2014
South Carolina	HB 4922	2014
Virginia	SB 516	2014
Washington	HB 1432	2011
Utah	HB 232	2015

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

READINESS AND FORCE MANAGEMENT

22 January 2015

The Honorable Chris Tuck
House Minority Leader
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative 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 6 (HB6) in the 2015 Alaska legislative session. This new and significant 2015 Department of Defense priority simply allows employers to utilize a veterans hiring preference, without fear of unanticipated discrimination allegations or related legal issues, and imposes no requirement upon private sector employers.

This effort will greatly aid private sector employers hire Service members who move back to Alaska upon completing their military service obligation. It will legally allow them to give hiring preferences to those new veterans and greatly assist the veteran's transition to civilian life. Because state and local governments already offer this hiring preference, the change would also allow some measure of equity between the private and public sector when competing for veteran talent. If the policy change, as represented in HB6 is successful, Alaska will join 12 other states already providing this help to transitioning veterans.

Last year, according to the Defense Manpower Data Center data, over 2,000 military personnel separated and returned to Alaska and we know that number is likely to rise in the coming year given the continued force shaping efforts. Nationally, as of June 2014, 573,000 veterans were unemployed. The jobless rate for post 9/11 veterans was 6.4%, with young male veterans aged 18-24 enduring an unemployment rate of 12.4%; these percentages exceed civilian counterpart rates. If enacted, this measure certainly has the potential to have a significant positive impact.

We greatly appreciate that the Alaska legislature has been a champion in addressing our key military family quality of life issues for the past eight years. We intend to provide as much information and support as possible as your policy recommendation (currently contained in HB6) moves forward in upcoming hearings before the House Military & Veterans Affairs and Labor & Commerce Committees and on the House Floor.

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 571.372.5321or Mark at 571.309.4622, mark.b.sansouci.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Langdon, Ed.D.
Director, State Liaison & Educational Opportunity
(Military Community and Family Policy)

PROTECTION FOR PRIVATE SECTOR VETERANS' HIRING POLICIES

Private sector employers attempting to establish preferred veteran hiring practices may be risking claims of discrimination.

KEY MESSAGE: Many companies would like to hire veterans because of their unique skill sets, proven work ethic, and reliability, but are hesitant to do so out of fear of being sued under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, Title VII, Section 11 of the Civil Rights Act contains a carve-out that exempts veterans' preference processes that are authorized by state statute.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

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

As of June 2014, 573 thousand Veterans were unemployed and the jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans was 6.4 %, with young male Veterans (ages 18 to 24) experiencing an unemployment rate of 12.4%.[1]

- Forty States and the District of Columbia award preference to veterans who are being considered for hire to a *public* position.
    - Unlike government employers, who have been incorporating veterans' hiring preferences since 1944, *private* employers are prohibited from establishing comparable business hiring policies.
    - Because veterans are overwhelmingly male, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) interpreted many veterans' preference processes to have a disparate impact on women.
- Statutes that allow private sector veteran preference policies (that are parallel to those used by state and local governments) allow employers to equitably compete for veteran talent.
- Through statute, states can establish policy that enables employers to provided targeted improvements in veteran workforce opportunities:
    - The statute can authorize, without mandating, a private sector employer to establish a veterans' preference process for honorably discharged veterans;
    - The veterans' preference processes authorized in state statute are not subject to EEOC challenge under the Title VII exception[1]:
        - "Nothing contained in this subchapter shall be construed to repeal or modify any Federal, State, territorial, or local law creating special rights or preference for veterans."[2]
        - The language requires that an employer applies the preference policy uniformly to employment decisions regarding hiring and promotion.

[1] U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Policy Guidance on Veterans' Preference Under Title VII, Notice N-915.06.*
[2] *42 U.S.C. § 2000e-11 (1982).*

HIRING PROTECTION BESTS PRACTICES

SUBJECT: Private sector employers attempting to establish preferred veteran hiring practices may be risking claims of discrimination. States can protect these employers by enacting language that offers the option to incorporate a veterans' hiring preference policy.

PRINCIPLES:

- The statute can authorize, without mandating, a private sector employer to establish a veterans' preference process for honorably discharged veterans;

- The veterans' preference processes authorized in state statute are not subject to EEOC challenge under the Title VII exception[1]:
  - "Nothing contained in this subchapter shall be construed to repeal or modify any Federal, State, territorial, or local law creating special rights or preference for veterans."[2]
  - The language requires that an employer applies the preference policy uniformly to employment decisions regarding hiring and promotion.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

- Section from FL HB 7015 2014[3]:

"F.S. 295.188 Preference in hiring veterans for private employers.-

(1) The Legislature intends to establish a permissive preference in private employment for certain veterans.

(2) A private employer may adopt an employment policy that gives preference in hiring to an honorably discharged veteran, as defined in s. 1.01(14); the spouse of a veteran with a service-connected disability, as described in s. 295.07(1)(b); the unremarried widow or widower of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability, as described in s. 295.07(1)(d); or the unremarried widow or widower of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died in the line of duty under combat- related conditions. Such policy shall be applied uniformly to employment decisions regarding hiring and promotion.

(3) These preferences are not considered violations of any state or local equal employment opportunity law."

DISCUSSION:

- The language in the third paragraph emphasizes protecting the employer's right to hire, rather than mandating the employer must hire a veteran.

- Although a private sector employer may currently establish a voluntary veterans' preference process, many are hesitant to do so out of fear of being sued under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.
  - Because veterans are overwhelmingly male, the EEOC has interpreted many veterans' preference processes to have a disparate impact on women. For example, Florida has

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[1] U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Policy Guidance on Veterans' Preference Under Title VII, Notice N-915.06.*

[2] *42 U.S.C. § 2000e-11 (1982).*

[3] Online Sunshine, Florida Legislature, 2014 Florida Statutes Title XX, CH 295, www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/

roughly 1.5M veterans. Of the total number, roughly 1,354,000 are men and roughly 166,000 are women.

- Section 11 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act contains an exemption for veterans' preference processes that are authorized by state statute. To date, 12 states-Arkansas (Ark. Code Ann. § 11-15-103), Florida (HB 7015 2014: F.S. 295.188), Idaho (SB 1316), Iowa (SB 303), Maine (LD 1832/Chap. 576), Massachusetts (MA SB 1878), Minnesota, North Dakota (ND ST 37-19.1-05), Oregon (HB 4023),South Carolina, (HB 4922), Virginia (SB 516) and Washington (WA HB1432)-allow private employers to voluntarily give preference to veterans when making hiring decisions.

- Research by the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs suggests that when states authorize private employers to avail themselves of the Section 11 exemption, the disparate impact cause of action is taken off the table. However, the private employer's veterans' preference policy must be neutral in its application, and not a pretext for discrimination.

- While Florida has been mentioned above, the legislation enacted by the other states listed above cover the same protections with respect to hiring veterans. Additionally, Florida, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Washington are among the growing number of states that are including surviving spouses in their protection policies.

Hiring Military Veterans is Good Business

Unemployment rates high for these individuals

By Bill Whitmore

If your company's diversity recruiting strategy fails to include military veterans, you are missing out on working with some of our country's most outstanding men and women. Organizations that fail to recognize the extraordinary leadership qualities veterans bring to the workplace pass up the opportunity to work with results-oriented employees who have a strong sense of accountability and responsibility. It is time for our country's corporate leaders to awaken to the reality that combat leadership and military discipline translate into dynamic employees who can enhance an organization's productivity.

While the national unemployment rate hovers around 9.7 percent for civilians, the unemployment rate for young male veterans, including those returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, is more than double the national average at 21.6 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Isn't it time to shine the employment spotlight on the brave men and women who serve our country?

What essential set of life skills do military veterans bring to corporate America that makes them an indispensable pairing? The military trains our men and women to lead by example, as well as understand the nuances of delegation and motivation. As General Douglas McArthur once said: "A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others." Military veterans understand the value of teamwork, which they can apply in our country's offices and board rooms. Veterans understand their role within an organizational framework and serve as exemplary role models to subordinates while demonstrating accountability and leadership to supervisors.

Bill Whitmore

Veterans generally enter the work force with identifiable skills that can be transferred to the business world, and are often skilled in technical trends pertinent to business and industry. And what they don't know, they are eager to learn – making them receptive and ready hires in work environments valuing ongoing learning and training. Veterans represent diversity and collaborative teamwork in action having served with people from diverse economic, ethnic and geographic background – as well as race, religion and gender. Even under dire stress, veterans complete tasks and assignments in a timely manner as they have labored under restrictive schedules and resources on the battlefields and military installations they've served.

Employers can find qualified veterans from a variety of sources including the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Military.com, HireVeterans.com and the Wounded Warriors Project. Employers can become true partners with selected veterans' organizations and work with them proactively to ensure they are maximizing their ability to recruit from this extremely qualified talent pool.

Lest we forget, the men and women who have chosen to serve our country are patriots who have made enormous sacrifices to ensure our safety and freedom. By employing military veterans, we are saying, "thank you for your service" and for protecting us from terrorism and other threats. ❑

About the Author

Bill Whitmore is chairman, president & CEO of AlliedBarton Security Services, www.alliedbarton.com, the industry's premier provider of highly trained security personnel to many industries including commercial real estate, higher education, health care, residential communities, chemical/petrochemical, government, manufacturing and distribution, financial institutions and shopping centers.

Kendra Kloster

Subject: Veteran Preference

From: Dixie D. Banner [mailto:akdaisyd@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 11:52 AM
To: Kendra Kloster
Subject: Veteran Preference

To Rep., Tuck via Ms. Kloster.
I recommend this page: 10 Top Reasons to Hire Veterans.
You can read it on: http:/er/www.veteranstoday.com/2010/01/25/10-top-reasons-to-hire-veterans/

On a personal level there are other characteristics which justify hiring Veterans and offering Veteran Preference, such as:

- Veterans are trained and have the ability to learn via training, OJT, and other educational resources (institutional setting and books).
- They also learn and posses that "Can Do Attitude" which will allow them to purse, as well as, endure extraordinary and challenging circumstances.
- They have a sense of pride that is fed by having value to country, comrades, and family and community - Their Life and being has a purpose and there is a mission to serve. A sense of pride which flourishes when they know they can provide for themselves and for their families vs being supported by the government.
- Veterans also know how to make crucial, (life and death) decisions, as well as, facilitate Risk Management which saves time and money.
- Veterans are well adverse in compliance and operate in timely matter.
- Through their experiences, one learns skills and abilities, the value of networking which is especially valuable working on large project and remote conditions.

This last bullet point needs to be emfensized, especially if the State of Alaska, a partner of the AK LNG Pipeline is going to offer In Kind Services as means of investment. Veteran Preference is a point needs to addressed early in the base line schedule, so the partners can propose and outline personnel rsourse that will be available to this project. Other wise the project will not be over budget and time of proposed operations will be delayed. Lastly, if we do not have an identified trained work force those who are in management will bring staff from outside to support the project.

This sense of oversight and control has happened in the past and an event that should not be repeated again. If we live here and call Alaska home we should be the first who are called for duty. In reality there are many who are trained and prepared to work; however, it is the perception (many of those do not know or are aware of our values/abilities to work and live in a remote within harsh conditions), by many Technical and Management Recruiters that Alaska has limited resources which is invalid (if one does not fit the cookie cutter job description your resume is returned).

Thank you and hope my insight will offer support to your bill.
Dixie Banner

Kendra Kloster

Subject: House Bill 6

From: cptbob@gci.net [mailto:cptbob@gci.net]
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2015 4:55 PM
To: Representative.Curt.Olson@akleg.gov
Cc: Rep. Chris Tuck; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: House Bill 6

Representative Olson:

I am writing in support of House Bill 6 in encouraging the hiring of veterans by private employers.

First, I fully support encouraging private employers to employ veterans. Our state is great because of what our veterans are contributing in growing our state, with many serving in leadership in both the public and private sector. Encouraging further employment opportunities for those veterans choosing to make Alaska home is clearly in the best interest of the state.

However, my main concern with House Bill 6 is the continued use of the term "armed services" in defining "veteran". While the Alaska Statutes define veteran as "armed forces", the federal laws define veterans as "uniformed services" that allows all 7 uniformed services (Army, Navy Air Force, Marines Coast Guard, Public Health Service, & NOAA Corps) to be included. Titles 10 USC – Armed Forces, 37 USC – Pay and Allowances of the Uniformed Services, and 38 USC – Veterans Benefits define veterans as those who have completed "active duty" as it applies to "military service" in the "uniformed services". These Titles allows the US Public Health Service Officers and the NOAA Commissioned Officers to be recognized as veterans and qualify for veterans benefits. Except for the exclusion for these two uniformed services federally recognized as veterans, I fully support expanding the recognition of the other services that are valuable in the service to our state and nation.

While House Bill 6 and the accompanying Senate Bill 2 are not the vehicle to address the difference between the Alaska and Federal definitions of "veteran" as it applies to many of Alaska's residents, it is important to note that many federally recognized veterans of the US Public Health Service officers were deeply involved in the Indian Health Service programs in Alaska and supported USCG medical needs. NOAA officers served in monitoring our fisheries and charting our waters. After leaving service, many of us have continued to live in Alaska providing public service and growing successful companies.

After this session, I would be happy to assist your staff or a member that you recommend in drafting a bill to address the many statutory changes needed to bring the definition of "veteran" consistent with the federal definition. This would allow all of us federally recognized veterans to be recognized as Alaska veterans as well. It is simply a matter of pride for us as we have pride in being Alaskans.

Bob Pawlowski

Captain, NOAA (Ret)