

SCS HCS HB 1787 -- GUARD AT HOME PROGRAM

This bill establishes the Guard at Home Program to assist the spouse of an active-duty national guardsman or reservist by addressing his or her immediate needs and employment in order to keep the family from falling into poverty while the primary income earner is on active duty and to help returning guardsmen find work in situations where an individual needs to rebuild business clientele or an individual's job was eliminated while on deployment.

Subject to appropriations, the Department of Economic Development will hire a contractor to administer the program and ensure that the contractor meets certain qualifications specified in the bill, including the ability to provide a 20% match to the program through indirect or direct expenditures. The department will develop the criteria of the contract based on the following:

- (1) Eligible program participants will be families where:
 - (a) The primary income earner was called to active duty in defense of the United States for more than four months;
 - (b) The primary income is no longer available;
 - (c) The family is experiencing a significant hardship due to financial burdens; and
 - (d) The family has no outside resources available to assist with these hardships; and
- (2) Services may be provided to families in order to alleviate an immediate crisis and to provide economic stability while the primary income is not available due to the active military commitment. The bill specifies some of the services which may be provided.

The department will submit a report to the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the operation and progress of the program by January 1, 2007.

The bill becomes effective July 1, 2006, and the department must make every effort to ensure that families are being served by August 1, 2006.

The bill contains an emergency clause.