

## HB 2062 -- Military Families

Sponsor: Pearce

This bill changes the laws regarding members of the military and their families. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Adds the chairman of the Missouri Veterans Commission to the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission and clarifies that the commission's duties include developing policies and methods to improve the prosperity and employment opportunities of retired military members and the families of former military members;

(2) Specifies that the chair of the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission will be an ex officio member of the Missouri Veterans Commission and the commission will help veterans who are legal residents of Missouri;

(3) Allows a person in federal service who is eligible to register, but has not registered, to vote in any election. Currently, a person in federal service can only vote in a federal election;

(4) Allows a military dependent who has completed an accredited prekindergarten or kindergarten program in another state to enter kindergarten or first grade even if the child has not reached the required age for Missouri schools by August 1;

(5) Requires the State Board of Education to establish a rule to allow the issuance of a provisional teacher's certificate before the completion of a background check to the spouse of a military member who holds a teacher's certificate in another state that requires a background check and who has relocated within the last year;

(6) Allows school districts to accept a course in government completed in another state when a student transfers to a Missouri high school in ninth to twelfth grade to satisfy the state's graduation requirement;

(7) Establishes a new grant program for war veteran survivors at public higher education institutions. Twenty-five grants will be available annually, subject to appropriations, for the children or spouses of deceased or disabled Missouri resident veterans of combat for tuition and up to \$500 for the actual cost of books, with at least \$2,000 per semester for room and board. The grant may not be used for graduate study and is not available to a surviving child who is 25 years of age or older. Survivors must be certified as eligible by the Missouri Veterans Commission or a

United States Veterans Affairs medical authority;

(8) Renames the Guard at Home Program to the Hero at Home Program and extends the program to cover the first year after discharge from deployment, to cover reservists, and to cover situations in which an individual cannot return to his or her previous employment;

(9) Requires the Department of Higher Education to establish a rule ensuring that resident tuition continues to be available to the spouse and dependents of any military family who remain in Missouri after the military member has retired, died, or been reassigned;

(10) Requires the State Board of Education to pursue reciprocity agreements with other states for the transfer of students who are military dependents and specifies the contents of the agreements, which focus on the granting of credit;

(11) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to facilitate agreements between school districts and military installations to address strategies to assist children in transition to Missouri schools;

(12) Specifies that certain military dependents will be eligible to enroll full time in courses through the Missouri Virtual School; and

(13) Allows school districts to establish course credit and other policies to assist military dependents in meeting graduation requirements.

The bill contains an emergency clause except for the provisions regarding membership in the Missouri Preparedness and Enhancement Commission and the renaming of the Guard at Home Program.