

HCS #2 HB 1503 -- VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

SPONSOR: Dohrman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS #2" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill allows veteran-owned small businesses to participate in the Missouri Linked Deposit Program. An "eligible veteran-owned small business" is defined as any business owned by an honorably discharged veteran and Missouri resident who as agreed to locate his or her business in the state for at least three years and employs less than 100 employees, a majority of whom are Missouri residents. In considering which small businesses should receive reduced-rate loans through the Linked Deposit Program, a lending institution must give priority to those owned by veterans.

Any veteran who receives a small business loan through the Linked Deposit Program must also complete a boots-to-business program approved by the Department of Economic Development and be assigned a mentor for 365 days following the loan approval date. The owner and his or her mentor must meet at least once every 90 days.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that after World War II, 49% of returning veterans started their own businesses because a federal loan guarantee was available. Currently, only 6% of returning veterans start their own business. This bill would provide veterans with an opportunity to start their own business and contribute to the state's economy.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dohrman; Charles Lynn Lowder, One Vet at a Time; H. Keith Crumley, One Vet at a Time; Pat Rowe Kerr; Dewey Riehn, Missouri Alliance of Veterans Organizations; and VFW.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the bill is a starting place and could be strengthened to help more veterans.

Testifying on the bill was Don Koonce.