

SS SCS SB 120 -- MILITARY AFFAIRS

SPONSOR: White (Bromley)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill modifies provisions relating to military affairs, including state designations, hiring preferences and classifications for state employment, state agency services, school designations, military protections for motor vehicle insurance, and qualified military projects in the Missouri Works Program.

MILITARY FAMILY MONTH (Section 9.297, RSMo)

This bill designates November as "Military Family Month" in Missouri to recognize the daily sacrifices of military families.

This provision is the same as a provision in SS SCS SB 718 and HB 1328 (2020).

SURVIVING SPOUSES IN THE MERIT SYSTEM (Section 36.020)

This bill modifies the definition of "surviving spouse" in provisions of law relating to the merit system.

This provision is the same as HB 296 (2021), SB 620, a provision in SS SCS SB 718 (2020), in HCS SB 282 (2019), and in the perfected HB 461 (2019) and is similar to a provision in HCS SB 587 and HB 1566 (2020).

HIRING PREFERENCES FOR MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS (Sections 36.221 and 105.1204)

This bill creates new provisions establishing hiring preferences for current or former members of the Missouri National Guard for purposes of state employment. Specifically, in filling any position of state employment in a state agency, the appointing authority or employing agency must offer an interview to every applicant who is or was a member of the Missouri National Guard and meets other specified criteria.

These provisions are the same as SB 78, HB 659 (2021), and HB 1491 (2020).

DEPARTMENT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD (Sections 41.035 and 650.005)

This bill establishes the "Missouri Department of the National

Guard", which will be headed by the Adjutant General and will administer the militia and programs of the state relating to military forces, except for the Missouri Veterans Commission. The Office of Adjutant General and the militia are transferred from the Department of Public Safety to the Missouri Department of the National Guard.

These provisions of the bill are contingent upon the passage of a Constitutional amendment that provides for the establishment of the Missouri Department of the National Guard.

These provisions are similar to SCS SB 198 (2021) and are similar to provisions in HB 60 (2021), SS SCS SB 718, in HCS SS#2 SCS SB 523, HCS SS SB 600, HCS SB 774, SB 896, and HCS HB 2209 (2020).

CLASSIFICATION OF MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS (Section 41.201)

This bill provides that service members of the Missouri National Guard will be considered as state employees for the purpose of operating state-owned vehicles for official state business unless they are called into active federal military service by order of the President of the United States.

This provision is the same as the perfected SS SB 258 (2021) and is substantially similar to HB 391 (2021).

VETERAN QUESTIONS ON STATE AGENCY FORMS (Section 42.390)

This bill requires that every state agency will ensure that any form used to collect data from individuals that was first created or subsequently modified on or after August 28, 2021, include the following questions:

(1) Have you ever served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States and separated from such service under conditions other than dishonorable?

(2) If answering Question 1 in the affirmative, would you like to receive information and assistance regarding the agency's veteran services?

Every state agency will prepare information regarding applicable services and benefits that are available to veterans and provide such information to those who answer the questions in the affirmative.

INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR MILITARY RETIREMENT BENEFITS (Sections 143.121 and 143.124)

Currently, an income tax deduction is authorized for retirement benefits received by a taxpayer for the taxpayer's service in the Armed Forces of the United States, including reserve components and the National Guard. This bill makes a technical correction to ensure that 100% of such benefits may be deducted without any reductions.

These provisions are the same as SB 629 (2021).

PURPLE STAR CAMPUS (Section 160.710)

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will designate a school district as a purple star campus if the school district applies and qualifies for the designation. To qualify as a purple star campus, a school district will:

- (1) Designate a staff member as a military liaison to serve as the point of contact between the school district and the military connected student, as defined in the bill;
- (2) Identify military connected students enrolled in the school district;
- (3) Determine appropriate services available to military connected students;
- (4) Coordinate programs relevant to military connected students;
- (5) Maintain on the school district website an easily accessible webpage that includes resources for military connected students, including information regarding relocation, enrollment, registration, and transferring records to the school district, academic planning, counseling, and the military liaison;
- (6) Establish and maintain a transition program led by students, when appropriate, that assists military connected students in transitioning into the school district;
- (7) Offer professional development and education for staff members on issues related to military connected students; and
- (8) Offer at least one of the following: A resolution showing support for military connected students, recognition of military holidays with relevant events, or a partnership with a local military installation that provides opportunities for active duty military members to volunteer with the school district, speak at an assembly, or host a field trip.

This provision is similar to HB 390 (2021).

VETERAN DESIGNATIONS ON DRIVER'S LICENSES (Section 302.188)

Currently, the Department of Revenue may determine the appropriate placement of veteran designations on driver's licenses and identification cards. This bill provides that the Department must place the veteran designations on the front of the licenses and identification cards.

This provision is the same as SB 494 and HB 262 (2021).

MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE (Section 379.122)

This bill requires the Adjutant General to ensure that members of the state military forces receive notice of certain protections relating to motor vehicle insurance, and encourages the secretaries of the branches of the United States Armed Forces to likewise notify members under their jurisdictions.

The bill specifically notes that the term "adverse underwriting decision" will include a decision to charge an increased premium.

This provision is the same as a provision in SS SCS SB 718 and SB 1036 (2020).

QUALIFIED MILITARY PROJECTS IN THE MISSOURI WORKS PROGRAM (Sections 620.2005 and 620.2010)

This bill modifies the Missouri Works program to provided that, for qualified military projects, the benefit will be based on part-time and full-time jobs created by the project.

This bill contains an emergency clause for these provisions.

These provisions are the same as SS SB 2 (2021) and are similar to provisions in SS SCS SB 718, in HCS SS#2 SB 704, in SS#2 SCS HCS HB 1854, and SB 1057(2020).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that some provisions of this bill were requested by the United States Department of Defense. Additionally, this bill provides technical fixes, creates a new state department for the National Guard, and creates other programs that assist veterans, military members, or their families. Additionally, numerous parts of this bill have been passed by each chamber.

Testifying for the bill was Senator White.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose submitted written online testimony.

Testifying against the bill was Arnie Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.