

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6482

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1996

Title: An act relating to veterans' benefits.

Brief Description: Providing for veterans' preferences.

Sponsors: Senators Winsley, Haugen, Rasmussen and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/25/96, 2/1/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/12/96, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Deccio, Franklin, McDonald, Newhouse and Wojahn.

Staff: Katie Healy (786-7403)

Background: Veterans receive specific preferences on competitive examinations for public employment. The preference must be claimed within eight years. Veterans also receive other benefits such as license and property tax benefits, military credit for retirement systems, potential tuition exemptions at state universities and preference in purchasing state property. Counties levy a tax to create the veterans' assistance fund, used for aiding indigent veterans and their families. A county may be required to pay for the burial of indigent veterans.

The definition of veteran includes an individual who has received an honorable discharge or a discharge for physical reasons with an honorable record, and who served in World Wars I or II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era or any other declared war.

Summary of Bill: The definition of veteran is expanded. The definition of the Vietnam area is clarified. The Persian Gulf War and its respective dates are added as a period of war. Other recent armed conflicts are added. The period of time which an individual must have served active military duty in order to qualify for veteran preference on competitive examinations for public employment is added.

The veteran participating in competitive examinations for public employment must receive a veteran's preference, and must receive a passing grade on the examination in order to receive the preference. Further clarification is given as to when the preference is applied, and what percentage is applied.

A veteran's preference must be claimed within ten years of the individual's release from active military service, instead of eight years.

Technical changes and clarifications to language are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: An update is needed to the law. No update has been done since 1975. This bill brings up to date significant definitions. Municipalities strictly interpret the language, so there are periodic problems. Thousands of trained veterans are going to pledge their future to Washington State. This bill also addresses the concerns of merchant marines. Only the dead see the end of war.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Beau Bergeron, Director, WA State Department of Veterans Affairs (pro); Dennis Primoli, Veterans Legislative Coalition (pro); Lawrence M. Jacobson.