

SUBJECT: Requiring a report on the transition from military service to employment

COMMITTEE: Defense and Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Gutierrez, Blanco, Arévalo, Cain, Flynn, Lambert, Wilson

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Norma Bremmer and Lashondra Jones, Catholic Charities; Adrienne Evans-Quickley, Womens Army Corps Veterans Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mackenna Wehmeyer, Career Colleges and Schools of Texas; Ned Munoz, Texas Association of Builders; James Thurston, United Ways of Texas; Romaine Barnett and Olivia Bush, Women Veteran Services, Catholic Charities)

Against — None

On — Bob Gear, Jr., Texas Workforce Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tim Shatto, Texas Veterans Commission)

DIGEST: HB 257 would require the Texas Workforce Commission, in consultation with the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services, to submit an annual report that identified:

- the five most common military occupational specialties of service members who were transitioning from the military to civilian employment;
- the five occupations for which the identified military occupational specialties best offer transferable skills; and
- any industry-based certifications that align with the identified military occupational specialties.

The report also would include any useful information for supporting the transition of service members and veterans into the workforce identified by the commission in administering the College Credit for Heroes program.

The commission would submit the report no later than September 1 of each year to the governor, lieutenant governor, the House speaker, and chairs of the legislative committees with appropriate jurisdiction. The first report would be due by September 1, 2018.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 257 would help address the employment gap many members of the military experience while transitioning into the workforce. The collection of data required by the bill would be aimed at connecting employers with returning military personnel with relevant occupational experience.

Returning military personnel often experience difficulty searching for employment because it is not always obvious how they can use their skillsets in civilian settings. No effective means is currently available to compile employer and workforce data to help strengthen existing workforce pipelines for the growing population of returning service personnel. The report required by the bill would address this by identifying the top military occupational specialties and their civilian equivalents, which is critical to helping veterans expedite their transition back into the civilian workforce.

This bill also would help industries address labor shortages by providing employers with data to help them determine which military specialties can be integrated into the workforce. Not all military occupational specialties translate to civilian settings as expected, so the report required by HB 257 could help employers match opportunities with transferrable skills and bridge the gap between military and civilian employment.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

A companion bill, SB 1457 by Buckingham, was left pending on April 5 in the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security.