



## **Committee Schedule of Veterans Interest Week of February 6 – 11, 2012**

The House and Senate will be on official break from Thursday, Feb. 2 through Tuesday, Feb. 7 for precinct caucuses. No floor sessions or committee meetings will be scheduled.

### **Wednesday, February 8, 2012**

Committee: Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans

Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Room 123 Capitol

Chair: Senator Mike Parry

Agenda:

SF 1597 (DeKruif): Veteran-owned small businesses set aside program modification and county set aside program authorization.

SF 1689 (DeKruif): Veterans reemployment rights protections extension.

## **State Legislative Week in Review Week of January 30 – February 3, 2012**

*Monday, January 30, 2012*

### **Senate Session**

Bill introductions of Veterans interest:

Senators DeKruif, Daley, Parry, Gazelka and Miller introduced:

**SF1597:** A bill for an act relating to veterans; changing the small business set-aside program for veteran-owned small businesses; authorizing county set-aside programs for veteran-owned small businesses; changing reporting requirements; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 161.321, subdivisions 2, 5, 8, by adding subdivisions; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 375.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators Daley, DeKruif, Nelson, Parry and Miller introduced:  
SF1599: A bill for an act relating to veterans affairs; permitting a preference for private employers to hire and promote veterans; permitting a preference for private employers to hire and promote the spouse of a disabled or deceased veteran; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 197.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

### **House Session**

Bill introductions of Veterans interest: None

### **Committee Hearings**

#### **House Veterans Services Division**

HF1821 (Dettmer): Small business set-aside program changed for veteran-owned small businesses, county set-aside programs authorized for veteran-owned small businesses, and reporting requirements changed. This bill strengthens the Set-Aside Program for state construction contract awarding by MnDOT to veteran-owned small businesses. It also authorizes counties to establish set-aside programs for veteran-owned small businesses bidding on county contracts for goods and services, as well as county construction contracts.

Current law states that: The purpose of this set-aside program – i.e., the contract bid-preference program for veteran-owned small businesses – is to facilitate the transition of veterans from military to civilian life, and to help compensate veterans for their sacrifices, including but not limited to their sacrifice of health and time, to the state and nation during their military service, as well as to enhance economic development within Minnesota.

The bill, as amended, was tabled to allow for continued discussion among all concerned parties.

HF1903 (Urdahl): Honor guard stipends preference modified. Current law directs the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to pay, within available funds and upon request by a local unit of a Congressionally chartered Veterans organization or its auxiliary, up to \$50 to the local unit for each time that local unit provides an honor guard detail at the funeral of a deceased veteran. If the local unit provides a student to play “Taps” at the funeral, the local unit may pay some or all of the \$50 to the student.

Priority for payment to these local units is to be given to those that do not have charitable gambling operations. This bill would repeal that authorization. The bill was passed and re-referred to the House State Government Finance Committee.

HF1819 (Dettmer): Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program modified. This bill provides immunity from civil liability for persons involved in the Minnesota National Guard's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program. It establishes civil immunity in that a person who provides services to an active or reserve service member or to an immediate family member of the service member before, during, or after mobilization or deployment is not liable for damages caused as a result of the provision of services; and a recipient of services is not liable for damages incurred by the person in the course of providing services to the recipient.

Liability would still exist if the damage results from willful and wanton or reckless acts or omissions by either the person providing services or the recipient of the services. The bill, in the form of a delete-all amendment, was passed and re-referred to the Civil Law Committee.

HF1416 (Gruenhagen): Military affairs; nonpublic employees reemployment rights protections extended. This bill would ensure that a Minnesotan who is a member of another state's National Guard would have the same reemployment rights following activation for a state emergency as a Minnesotan serving with the Minnesota National Guard would have if activated for a Minnesota emergency. Under current law, this is not the case.

Amendments to update a reference to federal USERRA law and to change the effective date were passed and the bill was re-referred to the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee.

*Wednesday, February 1, 2012*

### **House Session**

HF 56: A bill for an act relating to veterans; providing a waiver of immunity for veterans to sue the state of Minnesota as an employer in federal or other courts for violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and

Reemployment Rights Act was read for the third time and placed upon its final passage. The bill passed unanimously, on a vote of 125-0.

The House acceded to the request of the Governor for a Joint Convention to hear the State of the State message of the Governor at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 15, 2012 in the House Chambers; the Chief Clerk is instructed to invite the Senate to meet in Joint Convention at 6:45 p.m.; and the Speaker will appoint a committee of 5 members of the House of Representatives to act with a similar committee to be appointed by the Senate to escort the Governor to the Joint Convention. The motion prevailed.

Bill introductions of Veterans interest: None

### **Committee Hearings**

#### **House State Government Finance**

HF1903 (Urdahl): Honor guard stipends preference modified. Current law directs the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to pay, within available funds and upon request by a local unit of a Congressionally chartered Veterans organization or its auxiliary, up to \$50 to the local unit for each time that local unit provides an honor guard detail at the funeral of a deceased veteran. If the local unit provides a student to play “Taps” at the funeral, the local unit may pay some or all of the \$50 to the student.

Currently, priority for payment to these local units is given to those that do not have charitable gambling operations. This bill would repeal that authorization. The language change should help address the current delays in processing the stipends. The bill was passed and referred to the General Register.

#### **Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans**

An overview of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) was presented by Kathy Vitalis, Executive Director. MACV is a non-profit organization that assists veterans and their families in crisis and experiencing homelessness.

An overview of Veterans Re-employment was presented by Barb O’Reilly, Director of Women Veteran and Employment Initiatives, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate of post 9/11 veterans was 12% in 2010 compared the Minnesota’s overall unemployment rate of 5.7% for

December 2011. Our veterans need support in preparing for employment search and opportunity. At the Minnesota Workforce Centers, Veteran Employment Representatives are working with Veterans to provide one-on-one skill assessment; coordinate resume-writing assistance; translate military skills to civilian skills; and assist with interviewing skills. The Veteran Employment Representatives are required to follow-up with Veterans to ensure they are on track to finding employment. The Veteran Employment Representatives also conduct outreach to build relationships with employers. When they receive job postings from employers they are able to match qualified veterans to the position.

An interagency working group meets bi-weekly to identify the challenges and create a path for veterans to prepare for employment.

SF 1599 (Daley): Permissive preference for veterans and spouses of veterans in private employment. This bill permits, but does not require, a private employer to grant preference to a veteran, to a spouse of a disabled veteran who has a service-connected permanent and total disability, or to a surviving spouse of a deceased veteran in hiring and promotion. It declares that granting a preference to a veteran, to the spouse of a disabled veteran, or to the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran does not violate any local or state equal employment opportunity law.

Federal law allows a private employer to give preference to veterans, without violating the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, even though such preferences may have a disparate impact on men, if the preference is permitted under state or local law. The bill was passed and re-referred to the Committee on Jobs and Economic Growth.

*Thursday, February 2, 2012*

### **Senate Session**

Senate accepted the invitation of the House of Representatives to meet in Joint Convention in the House Chamber at 6:45 p.m., Wednesday, February 15, 2012, to receive the message of the Honorable Mark Dayton, Governor of the State of Minnesota and appointed a committee of five to escort the Governor, along with the House committee of five, to the House Chamber.

Bill introductions of Veterans interest:

Senator Parry introduced:

**SF1639:** A bill for an act relating to state government; reducing the number of departments in the executive branch; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, sections 15.01; 15.06, subdivision 1; 15A.0815, subdivisions 2, 3; 43A.08, subdivision 1a.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators Nelson, Parry and Carlson introduced:

**SF1641:** A bill for an act relating to veterans; family law; allowing recovery of a portion of the marriage license fee for members of the armed forces who complete premarital education after the license is issued; amending Minnesota Statutes 2011 Supplement, section 517.08, subdivision 1b.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators Parry, Nelson, Miller and Carlson introduced:

**SF1642:** A bill for an act relating to the military; beyond the yellow ribbon program; civil immunity; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 192.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators Carlson, Parry, Gazelka and Miller introduced:

**SF1643:** A bill for an act relating to veterans; modifying eligibility for a tax credit for past military service; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 290.0677, subdivision 2.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators Nelson, Parry, Benson and Senjem introduced:

**SF1650:** A bill for an act relating to state government; requiring a request for proposal for a reorganization study.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.

Senators DeKruif, Daley, Parry and Reinert introduced:

**SF1689:** A bill for an act relating to military affairs; extending reemployment rights protections to certain nonpublic employees; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 192.261, subdivision 6.

Referred to the Committee on State Government Innovation and Veterans.