

Vote YES for HB20-1222: Veterans Hiring Preference

Concerning the authority of a private employer to adopt a veterans preference employment policy when hiring new employees

*Sponsors: Rep. Terri Carver
Sen. Dennis Hisey & Sen. Nancy Todd*

The Context:

- All fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico award preference to veterans in hiring for **public** positions.
- Thirty-nine states specifically allow **private** employers to have a veterans preference in employment matters. Fifteen of these states extend the preference to the spouse of a disabled veteran or to the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran.
- **Colorado is one of the few states that has not authorized a veterans hiring preference by the private sector for businesses that choose to do so.**

The Bill:

- The bill creates a statutory basis to allow a private employer to give preference to 1.) A veteran of the armed forces or the National Guard or 2.) The spouse of a disabled veteran or a veteran killed in the line of duty, when hiring a new employee as long as the veteran or the spouse is as qualified as other applicants for employment.
- Federal law (Section 712 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) states, "Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to repeal or modify any Federal, State, territorial, or local law creating special rights or preference for veterans."
- Under this exception, thirty-nine states since 2011 have passed laws granting private employers the right to have a voluntary veterans preference.

Veterans and Employment:

- Veterans are more likely to have a disability than nonveterans. For our nation's newest veterans, disability ratings above 60% are more common.
- At 5.7%, unemployment for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan remains higher than average, as does the unemployment rate for veterans with disabilities at 5.2%.
- Veterans seeking employment can face numerous barriers. Employers might not understand how military training translates to the private sector. Public misconceptions as well as physical challenges can also make finding employment difficult.
- Colorado has over 400,000 veterans.
- At 5.8%, Colorado had the 2nd-highest rate of veteran unemployment in the nation in 2018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.