

RECENT LEGISLATION SUPPORTING VETERANS

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Banned hiring discrimination against veterans: Makes it an unlawful employment practice to refuse to hire someone because he/she is a veteran. (HEA 1242-2014)

Veteran hiring preference for private-sector businesses: Allows employers to give a preference to veterans in hiring, promoting or retaining workers. (SEA 298-2015)

Veteran preference for employment and training programs: Gives honorably-discharged veterans and their spouses priority for placement in any federal or state employment or training program administered by the Department of Workforce Development. (SEA 307-2017)

Veteran-owned small business preference for state government: Gives a state-government purchase preference to veteran-owned small businesses and sets a goal of procuring at least 3% of state contracts from veteran-owned small businesses every year. (SEA 564-2013)

Indiana Veteran Business Registry: Allows the Indiana Department of Administration to certify veteran-owned businesses for the state-government purchase preference, so these businesses don't have to go through the federal government's slower certification process. State certification also includes certain businesses owned by Indiana National Guard veterans that don't meet the federal government's definition of "veteran-owned business." (HEA 1312-2016.)

National Guard activation for state employees: Provides that a state employee who is a member of the Indiana National Guard or the reserves is entitled to a leave of absence without loss of time while on active duty, and requires the state to pay the difference between the employee's usual state salary and his/her military salary. (HEA 1324-2017)

EDUCATION SUPPORT

In-state tuition for veterans: Allows veterans who enroll in college within one year of their discharge to pay in-state tuition for undergraduate courses, even if they haven't lived in Indiana long enough to meet the state's requirements for in-state tuition. (SEA 177-2013)

Expansion of in-state tuition for veterans: Expands in-state tuition requirements to graduate courses for military personnel and veterans. (SEA 434-2015)

College credit for academic work done during military service: Requires state universities to award credit to veterans who passed certain tests or completed academic courses during their military service. (SEA 331-2014)

"Combat to College" program: Requires state universities with at least 200 veteran students to establish assistance geared specifically toward veterans. (SEA 115-2013)

"Second Service for Veterans" program: Requires the school of education at each public university to establish a "Second Service for Veterans" Program to encourage veterans to become teachers. (SEA 331-2014)

Financial aid for out-of-state Indiana National Guard members: Allows members of the Indiana National Guard who aren't Indiana residents to be eligible for state scholarships. (HEA 1333-2015)

TAX BENEFITS

Expanded eligibility for disabled veteran property tax deduction: Increases the assessed value limit for disabled veterans to claim a property tax deduction. (SEA 304-2016)

Military service income tax deduction: Increases the military service income tax deduction of \$5,000 to \$6,250 for retired military members and removes the requirement that veterans claiming the deduction be at least 60 years old. (HEA 1001-2017)

Maintaining homestead deduction during military service: Allows property to qualify for the homestead deduction even if the residence is leased while the owner is serving on active-duty in the armed forces. (SEA 304-2016)

Tax deduction for veterans' surviving spouses: Allows the surviving spouses of deceased veterans to keep the veteran property tax deduction (even if the property wasn't in the surviving spouse's name at the time of the veteran's death), and gives surviving spouses who do not own property a credit on their motor vehicle excise tax instead. (HEA 1546-2013)

Tax deduction for donated homes: Creates a homestead property tax deduction for veterans with at least 50% disability, if the homestead was donated to them by a tax-exempt organization. (SEA 304-2016)

IMPROVEMENTS TO VETERANS' SERVICES

Higher standards for local veterans' service officers: Establishes certification standards to ensure that county and city veterans' service officers are adequately trained. (HEA 1387-2013)

More state veterans' service officers: The 2017 budget includes \$300,000 per year to fund six new state veterans' service officers. (HEA 1001-2017)

Funding to fight homelessness and PTSD: The 2017 budget includes \$500,000 per year for a pilot program to improve the lives of homeless veterans and another \$500,000 per year for a pilot program to fund hyperbaric treatment of PTSD.

Hoosier Women Veterans Program: Established the Hoosier Women Veterans Program to ensure that Indiana's female veterans are receiving the services and benefits they need. (SEA 354-2014)

MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF FUND ELIGIBILITY

Expanded MFRF eligibility: Allows post-9/11 veterans and their families to receive financial assistance from the Military Family Relief Fund any time after their military service ends, instead of only within a 3-year window after their service ends. (SEA 352-2014)

Expanded MFRF eligibility again: Allows veterans who served on active-duty for at least one year during any armed conflict and their families to be eligible for financial assistance from the Military Family Relief Fund. (SEA 295-2016)

LEGAL SUPPORT

Indiana Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: Establishes a state supplement to the Federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act by allowing members of the military to cancel contracts for telecommunications services, Internet, TV, satellite radio, and athletic club memberships without charge. (HEA 1456-2015)

Stolen Valor: Honors the sacrifices of legitimate veterans by making it a Class A misdemeanor to pretend to be an active member or veteran in order to obtain a benefit. (HEA 1187-2016)

HONORARY RECOGNITION

Military Designation on ID Cards: Allows military members to have a designation on their driver's license or other government-issued ID indicating their active military service. This designation helps soldiers quickly prove their status when seeking military-related benefits. (SEA 280-2015)

Surviving spouse designation on ID cards: Allows veterans' surviving spouses to have a designation on their driver's license or other government-issued ID. (SEA 382-2017)

No parking fines for Purple Heart recipients: Exempts Purple Heart recipients from parking fees and fines if their vehicle displays a Purple Heart license plate. (SEA 563-2013)

Recognition for performing military funerals: Creates the Indiana Funeral Honors Ribbon to recognize Hoosier veterans who provide honorable and distinguished service in performing military funerals. (HEA 1387-2013)