
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Women have served honorably and courageously in
2 all of America's wars and conflicts since the American
3 Revolution. With nearly fifteen per cent of the United States
4 Armed Forces consisting of women, the population of female
5 veterans is increasing exponentially and is projected to exceed
6 ten per cent of the total veteran population by the year 2020.
7 More than eleven thousand female veterans reside in Hawaii
8 alone.

9 The circumstances and challenges faced by female veterans,
10 as well as women on active duty, are often different from those
11 of their male counterparts. Despite this, veterans' benefits
12 have traditionally been designed to address the needs of male
13 veterans.

14 In recognition of a growing need to improve veterans'
15 services to address the specific needs of female veterans in
16 such areas as medical and mental health care, child care
17 services, housing, and financial assistance, S.R. No. 6, S.D. 1,



1 was adopted in 2012, urging the United States Department of
2 Veterans Affairs and the Hawaii office of veterans' services to
3 develop comprehensive programs and services to address the needs
4 of female veterans and women on active duty. In response to
5 S.R. No. 6, S.D. 1, the Hawaii office of veterans' services
6 established the Hawaii women military veterans task force with
7 the mission "to improve the lives of women veterans who are
8 serving or who have served in the military, to identify and
9 address the unique needs of women veterans, and to harness the
10 power of women to influence change."

11 In 2013, after numerous meetings, the task force submitted
12 a report to the legislature that concluded that military women
13 face multiple interrelated complex problems, including a high
14 rate of military sexual trauma, and for female veterans, the
15 related reentry issues of adequate health care, high rates of
16 post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, and joblessness.

17 The legislature finds that one way to help address the
18 various problems and needs of veterans is to establish and fully
19 fund a veterans services counselor IV position within the office
20 of veterans' services to assist all veterans, with a primary



1 focus on female veterans, who served on active duty for the full
2 period during which they were activated.

3 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the
4 establishment of one full-time permanent veterans services
5 counselor IV position in the office of veterans' services.

6 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the
9 establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.00 FTE) permanent
10 veterans services counselor IV position in the office of
11 veterans' services to address the various problems and needs of
12 all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans, who
13 served on active duty for the full period they were activated.

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
15 defense for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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INTRODUCED BY:

[Handwritten signatures and names: Mark Haha, Lindedchingame, Lynn DeCorta, Samuel B King, and others]



H.B. NO. 2590

Report Title:

Office of Veterans' Services; Veterans Services Counselor IV;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the establishment of a veterans services counselor IV position within the Office of Veterans' Services to assist all veterans, with a primary focus on female veterans.

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