

SENATE BILL 625

P1

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By: **Senators Currie, Edwards, Muse, Peters, Waugh, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2015

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Department of Veterans Affairs – Employment Assistance for Veterans

FOR the purpose of expanding the responsibilities of service centers established by the Department of Veterans Affairs; requiring the Department to provide veterans with certain employment–related services for certain purposes; specifying the types of employment–related services provided to veterans; requiring the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop, in consultation with the Board of Trustees and the Veterans Commission, a certain program to reduce unemployment among veterans by assisting certain businesses to attract, hire, train, and retain certain veterans; requiring that a certain program promote certain strategies for certain purposes; specifying the contents of a certain program; authorizing certain employers to advertise as a “Veteran Certified Company”; specifying the duration of a certain certificate and authorizing the renewal of a certificate under certain circumstances; and generally relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs and employment assistance services and programs for veterans.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – State Government

Section 9–904(a) and 9–905

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2014 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – State Government

9–904.

(a) (1) The Department may:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(i) establish service centers that the Department considers necessary or advisable to:

1. facilitate and expedite the servicing of claims of veterans and dependents; and

2. **BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN MILITARY SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT FOR VETERANS; AND**

(ii) close any service center that the Department no longer considers necessary.

(2) The Department shall try to locate each service center centrally in the area to be served so that the greatest number of veterans:

(i) have access with the least possible delay, travel, and inconvenience; and

(ii) receive, as far as possible, personal attention.

9-905.

(A) The Department shall:

(1) help veterans and their dependents to receive promptly and regularly all of the benefits to which veterans or dependents are entitled under federal law;

(2) help veterans and their dependents in:

(i) preparing, in proper form, claims for benefits;

(ii) presenting the claims to the appropriate governmental unit;

(iii) trying to prevent and to relieve congestion in the processing of the claims; and

(iv) obtaining and expediting action on the claims; [and]

(3) PROVIDE VETERANS WITH EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN COMBAT OR MILITARY SERVICE DUTIES AND WORKPLACE DUTIES INCLUDING:

(I) RESUME DEVELOPMENT;

(II) JOB SEARCH RESOURCES;

(III) WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE;

(IV) JOB COACHING; AND

(V) ANY OTHER SERVICES THAT WILL HELP VETERANS BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN MILITARY SERVICE AND THE WORKPLACE; AND

[(3)] (4) on request, provide a veteran with a document certifying veteran status.

(B) (1) THE SECRETARY SHALL DEVELOP, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BOARD AND THE MARYLAND VETERANS COMMISSION, A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG VETERANS BY ASSISTING EMPLOYERS TO ATTRACT, HIRE, TRAIN, AND RETAIN VETERANS.

(2) THE PROGRAM DEVELOPED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL PROMOTE STRATEGIES FOR CONNECTING EMPLOYERS TO QUALIFIED VETERANS INCLUDING:

(I) A WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS;

(II) A CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS;

(III) MEASURABLE GOALS FOR HIRING AND RETAINING VETERANS; AND

(IV) THE COLLECTION OF 12- AND 24-MONTH BENCHMARK DATA FROM CERTIFIED EMPLOYER RECRUITING AND HIRING REGIONS, INCLUDING:

1. VETERAN POPULATION DATA; AND

2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.

(3) (I) A PARTICIPATING EMPLOYER THAT IS CERTIFIED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY ADVERTISE AS A “VETERAN CERTIFIED COMPANY”.

(II) THE DURATION OF A CERTIFICATE IS 24 MONTHS AND MAY BE RENEWED BY THE SECRETARY BASED ON A REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYER’S BENCHMARK DATA.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2015.