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Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Antani

Samuel Duling, Research Analyst

SUMMARY

- Requires the Director of Development to develop a resource to inform service members and their dependents of their earned benefits.
- Requires the Director to share this resource with individuals who respond affirmatively when asked by certain government entities, “Are you currently serving, or have you ever served, in the armed forces? Is a member of your immediate family currently serving, or have they ever served, in the armed forces?”
- Allows the Director to cooperate with other government entities to develop the resource to inform veterans and their dependents of their earned benefits.
- Requires the following entities to inquire about military status and to report to the Departments of Development and Veterans Services: Ohio Housing Finance Agency, metropolitan housing authorities, Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, and professional licensing agencies.
- Requires the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to cooperate with the State Board of Education, the Department of Development, and the Department of Veterans Services to develop, conduct, and maintain outreach programs to connect insurable dependents with their rightful benefits.
- Requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to cooperate with the Department of Development and the Department of Veterans Services to inform eligible enrolled students of benefits and services available to service members and veterans.
- Requires the Board of Trustees of a state institution of higher education to adopt a policy to cooperate with the Department of Development and the Department of Veterans Services to inform eligible enrolled students of benefits and services available to them.

- Requires the Director of Veterans Services to develop, conduct, and maintain an outreach program to connect veterans and their eligible dependents with their earned benefits.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Resources for service members and veterans

Under the bill, the duties of the Director of Veterans Services expand to include developing, conducting, and maintaining an outreach program for the purpose of connecting veterans with their earned benefits and services.¹ Additionally under the bill, the duties of the Director of Development expand to include developing, maintaining, and improving a resource, which include a printed publication, that informs service members and their dependents of the rights and benefits available to them. The Director of Development is required to distribute this printed resource to each individual who self-identifies as a service member, or a service member's family member, in the manner described below. The Director of Development may enter into agreements with state and federal agencies, with agencies of political subdivisions, with state and local subsidiary agencies, and with private entities as necessary to make the resource as complete as is possible.²

The bill requires various agencies to inquire about the military service background of individuals who are (1) applying for or receiving public assistance, (2) obtaining goods or services from a state institution, or (3) being imprisoned. The questions are, "Are you currently serving, or have you ever served, in the armed forces? Is a member of your immediate family currently serving, or have they ever served, in the armed forces?" Applications containing these questions must indicate that an individual is not required to answer.

For individuals who opt to answer one or both of these questions, the relevant agency or state institution is then required to enter the individual's responses into a database, including the name, address, and military status of the individual. This information must be made available to the Directors of Development as well as Veterans Services upon either Director's request.

Ohio Housing Finance Agency

Current law requires the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), when providing homeownership program assistance, to give preference to grants or loans for activities that provide housing and housing assistance to honorably discharged veterans.³ The bill requires the OHFA to inquire about service member or veteran status on any application for assistance or service provided by the OHFA. The OHFA then must provide the information of self-identified service members and veterans to the Departments of Development and Veterans Services for

¹ R.C. 5902.02.

² R.C. 122.924.

³ R.C. 175.052.

the purpose of improving each department's ability to connect service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.

State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Current law requires the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to oversee and provide coordination for the state's participation in and compliance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.⁴ The bill requires the Council to cooperate with the State Board of Education, the Department of Development, and the Department of Veterans Services to develop, conduct, and maintain outreach programs that connect insurable dependents with their rightful benefits and services.⁵

State institutions of higher education

The bill requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to cooperate with the Departments of Development and Veterans Services to inform eligible enrolled students of their earned benefits and services.⁶

Current law requires a board of trustees of a state institution of higher education to adopt a policy regarding the support and assistance the institution will provide to veterans and service members. The bill specifies that such a policy must include cooperating with the Departments of Development and Veterans Services to inform eligible enrolled students of their earned benefits and services.⁷

Metropolitan housing authorities

Under current law, a metropolitan housing authority is required, when selecting tenants for housing projects, to give preference to families of veterans and persons serving in the active U.S. military or naval service, including families of deceased veterans or deceased persons who were so serving at the time of death. The bill requires that all applications for assistance or services from a metropolitan housing authority inquire about service member or veteran status. The Director of Development is required to store this information in a database and share it with the Director of Veterans Services upon request. This information may be used to develop outreach programs to connect service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.⁸

Workers' compensation

The bill requires that an application for assistance or services provided by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation must inquire about service member or veteran status. The bill also

⁴ Ratified in R.C. 3301.60, not in the bill.

⁵ R.C. 3301.61; see also division (B)(10) of 38 United States Code 1965 for the definition of "insurable dependents."

⁶ R.C. 3333.164.

⁷ R.C. 3345.421.

⁸ R.C. 3735.42.

requires the Administrator of the Bureau of Workers' Compensation to share this information with the Directors of Development and Veterans Services for the purpose of conducting outreach programs to connect service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.⁹

Department of Job and Family Services

The bill requires the Department of Job and Family Services to release certain information about a public assistance recipient to the Departments of Development and Veterans Services for the purpose of connecting service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.¹⁰

Mental Health and Addiction Services

For a person residing in residential housing funded at least in part by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the bill requires that the person be asked about the person's service member or veteran status. The Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services is required to share this information with the Directors of Development and Veterans Services for the purpose of conducting outreach programs to connect service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.¹¹

Rehabilitation and Correction

The bill modifies the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's duty to regulate the admission and discharge of inmates by specifying that an inmate being admitted to a state correctional institution must be asked about the person's service member or veteran status. The Director of Rehabilitation and Correction is required to share this information with the Directors of Development and Veterans Services for the purpose of conducting outreach programs to connect service members and veterans with their earned benefits and services.¹²

Licensing agencies

Current law requires a licensing agency to consider an applicant for a license to have met the educational requirement for that license if the applicant has (1) completed a military program of training and has been awarded a military primary specialty at a level that is substantially equivalent to or exceeds the educational requirement for that license or (2) served in that military primary specialty under honorable conditions for a period of time that is substantially equivalent to or exceeds the experience requirement for that license.

⁹ R.C. 4123.071.

¹⁰ R.C. 5101.27.

¹¹ R.C. 5119.42.

¹² R.C. 5120.15.

The bill requires a licensing agency to provide certain information about an individual who is applying for a credential using a military training or service waiver to the Departments of Development or Veterans Services, depending on the military status of the individual.¹³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	08-02-21

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¹³ R.C. 5903.03.