

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 922 — Veterans' Preference in Employment

by Senator Burgess

The bill expands the benefit of a veterans' preference in employment and also increases points used in appointment and retention determinations. In expanding the benefit of a veterans' preference, the bill authorizes a state or a political subdivision of the state to waive a postsecondary educational requirement for a position of employment if the applicant is otherwise qualified. The education waiver applies to:

- A current member of a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces (U.S.A.F.);
- A current member of the Florida National Guard; or
- An honorably-discharged veteran.

As is the case for other veteran benefits in law, the education waiver is not available if the person is applying for a position designated as exempt. The bill, however, narrows the exemptions. A personal secretary of a public officer, a head of a department, and a position that requires licensure as a physician, osteopathic physician, or a chiropractic physician will now not be exempt from preference and priority requirements.

In increasing points used in appointment and retention determinations, the bill adds points used in assessing an applicant for employment of any given position as follows:

- From 15 to 20 points for an honorably-discharged veteran who has served on active duty and has a service-connected, compensable disability; a spouse of a person who has a total, permanent, service-connected disability and cannot qualify for employment; or a spouse of a person missing in action, captured, or forcibly detained or interned by a foreign government or power;
- From 10 to 15 points for a person who is an honorably-discharged veteran and has served at least 1 day during wartime; an unremarried widow or widower of a veteran who died from a service-connected disability; or a parent, legal guardian, or unremarried widow or widower of a servicemember of the U.S.A.F. who died in the line of duty under verified combat-related conditions;
- From 5 to 10 points for a person who is an honorably-discharged veteran or a current member of the reserves of the U.S.A.F. or the Florida National Guard.

The bill requires, rather than authorizes under current law, a political subdivision of the state to develop a written veterans' recruitment plan.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2021.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 118-0