

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Kevin Condict 271-7875

HB 64, relative to extending hiring preferences for military members and their spouses to the state and private businesses, and establishing purchase preferences for disabled veterans and military spouses regarding state supply purchases.

Hearing Date: March 26, 2025

Time Opened: 9:46 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:54 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, McGough, Gannon, Altschiller and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill expands the definition of veteran for purposes of veteran hiring and employment preferences to include a veteran's spouse and any active duty service member regardless of length of service. This bill also extends employment preferences for veterans or their spouse to include veteran owned suppliers of goods and services in dealings with the state.

Sponsors:

Rep. Roy

Rep. Creighton

Rep. Edwards

Rep. Moffett

Rep. Rhodes

Sen. Gannon

Who supports the bill: Kevin Grady (SVAC), Sen, William Gannon (SD 23), and Eric Pauer.

Who opposes the bill: Katie McLaughlin, Curtis Howland, James Gardner, and Timothy Finney.

Who is neutral on the bill: Danielle Albert (NHDOL).

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Tara Reardon, Senate District 15

- Sen. Reardon introduced House Bill 64 on behalf of the prime sponsor.

Kevin Grady, State Veterans Advisory Committee

- Mr. Grady explained that the State Veterans Advisory Committee (SVAC) has twenty members. The SVAC has a legislative committee that looks through all the bills making their way through the House and Senate. He said there are twenty bills they feel would make a positive impact, seven of which have been killed so far.
- Mr. Grady explained that one of the tenants of the SVAC is the belief that when one family member serves, the whole family serves. He said being a military spouse is one of the toughest jobs. He stated that one of the SVAC's goals is to, wherever possible, advance military spouses to the status of a military member.
- Mr. Grady said that the SVAC supports this bill.

Danielle Albert, Deputy Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Labor

- Ms. Albert said that the Department of Labor (DOL) has reviewed this bill. She said the language is clear, particularly the language surrounding the amendments to RSA 275-G, which regards the veterans hiring preference policies. She said that it is administered through the DOL.
- Ms. Albert said there will be some definitions added to the statute for "active-duty members", "military spouses", and "eligible service members" who would then be encompassed within the eligible individuals for the hiring preference.
- Ms. Albert said the DOL believes they can regulate this.
- Ms. Albert noted some technical points for consideration. She pointed to page 2, line 18, Section III. This section updates language to include eligible service members or military spouses. She explained that "military spouse" is defined to have the same meaning as that in RSA 21:50, IV. That part of the RSA defines "service-connected injury." She said she believes that should be V because on page 1, line 3 of the bill's language it adds a new definition of "military spouse." She recommended updating that roman numeral to define the correct term.
- Ms. Albert pointed to page 3, line 3. She said their understanding of the amendment being made to RSA 275-G:3 is that it is updating the language such that a qualifying list of documents to prove eligibility for the veterans hiring preference may be provided in accordance with RSA 21:50. She said the DOL's understanding is that this verification of eligibility preference, though amended, is still only applicable to veterans as the additional definitions for "military spouse", "active-duty member", and an "eligible service member" has not been added to that language.

Kevin Grady, State Veterans Advisory Committee

- Sen. Pearl asked, given the DOL's testimony, if that was the intent of the bill.

- Mr. Grady said he does not know if that was the intent. He noted the reference to RSA 21:50 and said that the SVAC has been trying to get anything dealing with veterans into that statute.

KC

Date Hearing Report completed: March 31, 2025