

Senate Commerce Committee

Aaron Jones 271-2609

HB 225-FN, relative to the employment of military spouses in the event of involuntary deployment of service member.

Hearing Date: March 25, 2025

Time Opened: 9:30 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:38 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Innis, Ricciardi, Murphy, Fenton and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator McGough

Bill Analysis: This bill provides employment protections to the spouses of military service members who are involuntarily mobilized in support of war, national emergency, or contingency operations.

Sponsors:

Rep. Creighton

Rep. Colcombe

Rep. Edwards

Rep. Gagne

Rep. Gorski

Rep. Harvey-Bolia

Rep. M. Murray

Rep. Pauer

Rep. Roy

Sen. Innis

Sen. Prentiss

Sen. Ward

Who supports the bill: Representative James Creighton, Kevin Grady (State Veterans Advisory Committee), Eric Pauer

Who opposes the bill: Curtis Howland, James Gardner

Who is neutral on the bill: John Garrigan (NHDOL)

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative James Creighton

- This bill came from the National Guard Bureau.
- If a service member is deployed for a year and a day, and their spouse must leave their job as a result of the deployment, then companies with over 50 employees must hold their position.
- There would be no costs because employers would not have to provide pay or benefits.
- Representative Creighton said the state should support service members who have deployed.

Kevin Grady, State Veterans Advisory Committee

- This bill was strongly supported by the Committee because they realized the toughest job was the job of being a military spouse.
- Someone could be working in IT making a six-figure salary prior to deployment, yet when they are deployed for 6 months, they could be making half of that salary. Mr. Grady said childcare is expensive, and it is possible that a military spouse must provide childcare themselves due to the loss of income.
- Deployments are stressful, but it is made easier when a spouse knows they have a job upon their return.
- **Senator Fenton** asked if it is held for up to one year.
 - **Mr. Grady** said an individual could not be sent on temporary duty for longer than a year. If it is a year and a day, it is a permanent change of station. This bill would protect against the worst-case scenario, which would be 90 days for the Guard, because they do not like to take them away from their civilian employers.
- **Senator Fenton** recognized it was important to protect veterans, but he feared a small business with 3 employees would have to fill a spot for 60 days until the employee has returned.
 - **Mr. Grady** believed it applied to 50 or more employees.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None

Neutral Information Presented:

John Garrigan, General Counsel, New Hampshire Department of Labor

- As written, the Department said they could enforce this bill.
- Under RSA 110-C, the Department has a similar role in protecting the employment of National Guard members.
- Existing civil penalty provisions would not apply to this statute; instead, Attorney Garrigan said the relief provided would be more equitable in nature where the Department could order someone to resume their position.
- **Senator Murphy** asked if it was true that this bill would apply to employers that have more than 50 employees.
 - **Attorney Garrigan** replied yes.