As Amended by Senate Committee

As Amended by House Committee

Session of 2026

HOUSE BILL No. 2626

By Committee on Veterans and Military

Requested by Lt Col Keith Marshall on behalf of the Adjutant General's Office

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AN ACT concerning veterans and military; relating to government employment preference; expanding such preference to include current members of the national guard and such members' eligible spouses; amending K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 73-201 and repealing the existing section.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 73-201 is hereby amended to read as follows: 73-201. (a) As used in this act:

(1) "Veteran" means:

(A) A person who served in the active military, naval, air or space service, including ~~those~~ groups and individuals listed under 38 C.F.R. § 3.7, and who was discharged or released therefrom under an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions;

(B) any person who has been issued the purple heart by the United States government or who:

(i) Served in the active military, naval, air or space service, including ~~those~~ groups and individuals listed under 38 C.F.R. § 3.7, and who was discharged therefrom under an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions;

(ii) received a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, air or space service, including ~~those~~ groups and individuals listed under 38 C.F.R. § 3.7; and

(iii) has a disability certified by the Kansas office of veterans services as being service-connected, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. or 10 U.S.C. § 1201 et seq.;

(C) the spouse of a service-connected disabled veteran with a permanent and total combined service-connected evaluation percentage of 100%;

(D) the surviving spouse of a veteran who died in the line of duty in the active military, naval, air or space service; and

(E) the spouse of a prisoner of war, as defined by K.S.A. 75-4364, and amendments thereto.

Veteran preference in government employment shall not apply to any

person who retired from the active military service with the pay grade of 04 or above unless the person retired due to wounds received in combat or is a disabled veteran with a service-connected disability evaluation rating equal to or greater than 10%, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. or 10 U.S.C. § 1201 et seq. *Veteran preference in government employment shall not apply to any current member of the Kansas army or air national guard with the pay grade of 04 or above, or a current member of a unit of the reserve forces of the United States military with the pay grade of 04 or above. Such exclusion shall not apply to eligible spouses.*

(2) "Competent" means a good faith determination that the person is likely to successfully meet the performance standards of the position based on what a reasonable person knowledgeable in the operation of the position would conclude from all information available at the time the determination is made. The basis for such determination shall include experience, training, education, licensure, certification or other factors determined by the decision-making authority as appropriate to determine the applicant's overall qualification and ability to successfully meet the performance standards of the position. The decision-making authority shall document such factors prior to the initiation of the selection process.

(3) "Disabled veteran" means a person who:

(A) Served in the active military, naval, air or space service, including ~~those~~ groups and individuals listed under 38 C.F.R. § 3.7, and was discharged or released therefrom under an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions;

(B) received a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, air or space service, including ~~those~~ groups and individuals listed under 38 C.F.R. § 3.7; and

(C) has a service-connected evaluation percentage, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. or 10 U.S.C. § 1201 et seq.

(4) "Eligible spouse" means an individual who is married to an individual who resides in and is stationed in Kansas and is:

(A) An active duty member of the military service of the United States;

(B) a current member in good standing of the Kansas army or air national guard; or

(C) a current member of a unit of the reserve forces of the United States military.

(5) "Servicemember" means an individual who resides and is stationed in Kansas and is:

(A) A current member in good standing of the Kansas army or air national guard; or

(B) a current member of a unit of the reserve forces of the United States military.

(b) In grateful recognition of the services, sacrifices and sufferings of veterans who served in the army, navy, air force, coast guard or marine corps of the United States in world war I and world war II, and of persons who have served with the armed forces of the United States during the military, naval and air operations in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan or other places under the flags of the United States and the United Nations or under the flag of the United States alone, and have been honorably discharged therefrom, the provisions of this section are enacted.

(c) Veterans*, servicemembers and eligible spouses* shall be preferred for initial employment and first promotion in the state government of Kansas, and in the counties and cities of this state, if competent to perform such services. Any veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse* thus preferred shall not be disqualified from holding any position in such service on account of the veteran's*, servicemember's or eligible spouse's* age or by reason of any physical or mental disability as long as such age or disability does not render the veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse* incompetent to perform the duties of the position applied for. When any veteran~~ shall apply~~**,** *servicemember or eligible spouse applies* for appointment to any such position, place, or employment, the officer, board or person whose duty it is or may be to appoint a person to fill such position, place or employment shall, if the applicant be a veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse* of good reputation~~,~~ and can competently perform the duties of the position applied for by the veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse*, consider the veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse* for appointment to such position, place~~,~~ or employment. Within 30 days of filling a position, eligible veterans*, servicemembers or eligible spouses* who have applied and are not hired shall be notified~~ by certified mail or personal service~~ that they are not being hired. Such notice also shall advise the veteran of any administrative appeal available.

(d) The provisions of this act shall not be applicable to any persons classed as conscientious objectors. The provisions of this act shall not be controlling over the provisions of any statute, county resolution or city ordinance relating to retirement or termination on the basis of age, of employees of the state or any county or city. Whenever under any statute, county resolution or city ordinance, retirement or termination on the basis of age of any employee is required at a certain age or is optional with the employer at a certain age, such statute, resolution or ordinance shall be controlling and shall not be limited by this section.

(e) (1) All notices of job openings, if any, and all applications for employment, if any, by the state and any city or county in this state shall state that the job is subject to a veteran's preference, how the preference works and how veterans*, servicemembers and eligible spouses* may take advantage of the preference and post a written statement of:

(A) The qualifications for such position;

(B) any preferred qualifications of such position;

(C) performance standards for the position; and

(D) the process that will be used for selection.

(2) A veteran, veteran's spouse or surviving spouse who qualifies for the veteran's preference, desiring to use a veteran's preference shall provide the hiring authority with a copy of the veteran's DD form 214, DD form 1300, NGB form 22 or other official discharge document recognized by the department of veterans affairs under which the spouse qualifies for the preference.

(3) A servicemember who qualifies for the veteran's preference and desires to use such veteran's preference shall provide the hiring authority with proof of residency in Kansas and a certificate signed by the unit commander that such servicemenber is:

(A) A current member in good standing of the Kansas army or air national guard and is stationed in Kansas; or

(B) a current member of a unit of the reserve forces of the United States military and is stationed in Kansas.

(4) An eligible spouse who qualifies for the veteran's preference and desires to use such veteran's preference shall provide the hiring authority with proof of residency in Kansas, ~~**and**~~**,** *proof of marriage to an eligible servicemember* ~~*and a certificate signed by a unit commander that such servicemember is:*~~

~~*(A) An active duty member of the military service;*~~

~~*(B) a current member of the Kansas army or air national guard stationed in Kansas; or*~~

~~*(C) a current member of a unit of the reserve forces of the United States military stationed in Kansas*~~ ***and official documentation verifying the servicemember's current military status, including military orders reflecting such servicemember's assignment or a current leave and earnings statement****.*

(f) Every employment center of the state and any city or county human resources department, if any, shall openly display documents that indicate that veterans*, servicemembers or eligible spouses* are eligible for a preference in their initial employment and any first promotion within the employment of the governmental entity.

(g) Any veteran*, servicemember or eligible spouse* who alleges that a state agency, city or county has not provided the veterans preference as required by this act, after exhausting any available administrative remedy, may bring an action in the district court.

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 73-201 is hereby repealed.

Sec. 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.