



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
*Department Of Human Resource Management*

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The Honorable Ralph S. Northam, Governor of Virginia  
The Honorable S. Chris Jones, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr., Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

**Subject:** Progress report on recommendation on policies to support the hiring and employment of disabled veterans in the state workforce.

Pursuant to Item 81N, Chapter 854 of the 2019 Virginia Acts of Assembly, the attached report provides information on the progress of the Department of Human Resource Management's (DHRM) work with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to identify and promote policies to support the hiring and continued employment of disabled veterans in the state workforce.

Of note, the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Veterans Services has agreed to continue the workgroup beyond the submission of this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily S. Elliott".

Emily S. Elliott  
Director

**REPORT FOR 2019 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY  
FROM THE WORK GROUP TO SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT OF  
DISABLED VETERANS**

## **Executive Summary**

Pursuant to Item 81N, Chapter 854 of the 2019 Virginia Acts of Assembly the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) was tasked to work with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to identify and promote policies to support the hiring and continued employment of disabled veterans in the state workforce.

DHRM, a V3 certified employer, has a long standing alliance with DVS to support their directorate of education, transition and employment of veterans. Although the Commonwealth has a number of established policies and processes to benefit veterans, additional measures can be taken to enhance our standing as an employer of choice for this talent pool.

### **Importance of the Issue**

The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that about 21,000 active duty service members transition off Virginia installations or out of active duty annually. In this age of an all-volunteer force, those who join the military show a deep commitment to public service and should be encouraged to remain so committed post-military service.

Finding pools of untapped top talent continues to be a priority for the Commonwealth. Veterans and military spouses have in-demand skills, yet many note obstacles in obtaining employment. Establishing proactive employment practices aimed at attracting, hiring, and retaining disabled veterans can mitigate these challenges.

### **Background**

In 2015, the McAuliffe Administration worked with Delegate Chris Stolle on HB1641 *Virginia Values Veterans Program; certification by state agencies & higher educational institutions* (Acts of the Assembly Chapter 0318). This created a mandate for state agencies to become V3-certified and hire qualifying veterans. As a result, over 140 agencies have become certified as V3 employers.

House Bill 1824 was introduced in the 2019 session of the General Assembly to amend and reenact §§ 51.1-1100 and 51.1-1104 of the Code of Virginia, relating to sick leave for state employees and allow for additional leave for certain disabled veterans.

Delegates Reid and Murphy were the patrons of the bill, which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations. The bill was gently laid on the table for the year. However, the Virginia Acts of Assembly included language directing further study on the issue and report back to the committee with recommendations.

The Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) was tasked to work with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to identify and promote policies to support the hiring and continued employment of disabled veterans in the state workforce.

A work group with representatives from DHRM and DVS was formed to:

- Work with the National Conference of State Legislatures to pull all passed and not passed legislation regarding additional leave for disabled veterans.
- Review legislation for disabled veterans that has been passed or introduced in other states, including New York, Massachusetts, Ohio and the federal sector.
- Contact Massachusetts and other states where similar leave bills for disabled veterans failed to determine reason for the failure and incorporate learning into recommendations.
- Review agency data on leave usage to assess whether or not a leave benefit would attract and retain veterans for employment in state government.
- Review current Commonwealth policies for improvements to attract and retain veteran talent.
- Analyze how many disabled veterans would be assisted by HB1824.
- Draft potential legislation.

The DHRM and DVS work group identified several states that introduced legislation to provide additional leave for disabled veterans to use for medical treatments for a military service-related disability. The surveyed states were not able to provide data on the impact legislation had on their recruitment efforts for veterans or the cost impact to the state. DVS conducted an analysis (Appendix A) on the number of veterans who could be assisted as part of HB1824 evaluation. This analysis was reviewed and utilized by the workgroup.

### **Work Group Recommendations**

- The Commonwealth should provide veterans up to 40 hours of additional leave annually specifically for medical care (appointments, exams, etc.) provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the U.S. Department of Defense.
- DHRM should consider a modification to Policy 4.35- Leave Sharing to permit disabled veterans to receive income by using annual leave hours donated to them by other employees for medical appointments for service connected disability.
- The Commonwealth should mandate Veterans at Work Society of Human Resources Management Certification or similar training for all positions classified in Human Resources roles involved in hiring, benefits or employer relations to better train Human Resources personnel about military cultural competencies.
- Funding should be provided to staff a full-time state recruiter at DHRM specifically focused on veteran, including disabled veterans, and military spouse recruitment for Commonwealth jobs with outreach efforts at local college career centers; military installation retirement and separation offices; military transition assistance programs; social media and online venues.
- Funding should be provided to develop recruitment materials (videos, brochures or fliers) specifically targeted to (disabled) veterans focused on state jobs. Materials would highlight flexible work, telework and alternative scheduling options within

state employment, as well as, information on the variety of jobs across the Commonwealth.

- Add preferential consideration for hiring military spouses to DHRM Policy 2.10 – Hiring in addition to veterans and military spouses for veterans killed in the line of duty. This will also require a corresponding amendment to the Code of Virginia § 2.2-2903.
- DHRM should establish a process to identify employees who are spouses of military member, who are also classified employees. This information should be maintained in the state’s Personnel Management Information System.
- DHRM and DVS should study the option of offering a flexible benefits package for veterans who do not need health or retirement benefits. A “credit” for these items could potentially be added to a veteran’s base salary to make it more competitive or to create an allowance for additional leave.
- The Commonwealth should take action to fund tuition assistance or loan forgiveness for disabled veterans.
- DVS should identify a lead to be responsible for establishing and providing resources, support and employment opportunities for disabled veterans.
- DVS should establish a designation and recognition program for Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Partner Healthcare System and V3 state employers who go, “above and beyond” to hire disabled veterans and spouses and incorporate in the V3 Awards Ceremony.
- DVS should develop a veteran hiring initiative that includes veterans and disabled veterans with criminal records by establishing a Public-Private partnership to include V3 companies, Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), Department of Veterans Services (DVS), Department of Corrections (DOC), and the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).
- DHRM and DVS should establish an education and awareness requirement for managers and supervisors on military culture, including information on Military Spouses.
- DHRM should establish a partnership and communicate job openings through the Military Spouse employment empowerment zone.
- DHRM should incorporate an option for video interviewing and links to state agencies/programs that offer help for (disabled) veterans within the Recruitment Management System.
- DHRM and DVS should establish an affinity group for state employees who are (disabled) veterans to focus on volunteer opportunities, new veteran employee

mentorship, morale events, and distribution of veteran and military family information.

- DHRM should edit the Employment Opportunities Plan template for Executive Branch agencies and institutions of higher education and include a specific section focused on disabled veterans.
- DVS should extend the V3 employment grant to state non-profit agencies that hire veterans that would otherwise qualify an employer for the employment grant and to qualified military spouse hires made within 10 months of a PCS move. Verified by military orders and/or Enlisted Records Brief/Officer Records Brief.
- DHRM and DVS should study the establishment of an alternative hiring/selection process for disabled veterans similar to the federal sector Schedule A.
- DHRM and DVS should study the establishment of a statewide On-the-Job Training Program for Finance, Human Resources, and Administrative jobs for veterans and spouses modeled after the Virginia Department of Transportation's Wounded Warrior Program.
- DHRM and DVS should work together to establish military-friendly job descriptions and job posting language as a standard for state agencies.
- DVS should examine whether state government (as an enterprise) should become par to the U.S. Army's Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) Program, with a single Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) covering all state agencies.
- DHRM and DVS should work together to examine how military salaries/benefits (i.e. the total compensation package) compares to state salaries with comparable levels of responsibility.
- DHRM and DVS should identify a tool (or develop an easy to use app) that would help state agencies better understand the value of military compensation (i.e. the total compensation package) in order to better understand what the state will need to offer (salary, benefits, health insurance, etc.) to provide a level of compensation to veterans that is at least equivalent to what is made in the military.
- DHRM, DVS and select other agencies that hire a large number of veterans should form a workgroup that meets on a periodic basis to review state hiring, employment trends and compensation practices related to veterans.

### **Findings of Current Practice**

The below are highlights of existing practices that should continue as these practices support the hiring and continued employment of veterans, including disabled veterans.

- DHRM continues to partner with agencies to advance the recruitment and retention efforts for all individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth, including those for veterans. Efforts continue across agencies to identify individuals with disabilities for tracking and reporting purposes. Tracking and reporting on veterans with disabilities may be easier due to available military documentation.
- DHRM Policy 2.10 – Hiring includes a hiring preference for veterans and for surviving spouses of veterans killed in the line of duty. This is also mandated by Code.
- DHRM Policy 3.05-Compensation includes provisions for exceptional recruitment and retention incentive options that allow agencies to offer additional leave to employees, including disabled veterans.
- DHRM Policy 4.35- Leave Sharing includes provisions for eligible employees to receive income by using annual leave donated by other employees, including disabled employees.
- Many DHRM employees involved in hiring, policy, compensation, and employee programs achieved Veterans at Work SHRM Certification. DHRM leadership promoted this certification to agency Human Resources staff in all Executive Branch agencies.
- Executive Branch agencies have incorporated a review of internal policies and practices and resources to accommodate applicants and workers with disabilities to access where improvements can be accomplished in their Employment Opportunities Plans submitted to DHRM annually.

## APPENDIX A

### HB1824 Calculations

	2014	2016	Change 2-yr	Chang/yr
Number of Veterans with 50% or greater disability rating	81,608	95,530	13,922	6,961
Number of Virginians 2018	8,517,685			
Percent over 18	78%			
Number over 18	6,643,794			
Percent over 18 in the labor force	64%			
Number in labor force	4,252,028			
Number of Veterans	720,000			
Number of Veterans In Labor Force	463,680			
Number of State Employees	100,000			
Percentage of state employees who are veterans	10%			
State employees as a percentage of labor force	2.35%			
Number of new 50% greater veterans/year	6,961			
Percentage of new 50% or greater, with disability incurred after 2016	50%		SWAG - and this is likely high	
Number of new 50% greater veterans/year with disability after 2016	3,481			
Percentage of these that might join state work force	2.35%			
Number that might join state workforce in a given year	82			
Number of retroactive - i.e. that joined state workforce after 2016 that might qualify	245			