



June 3, 2015

Final Legislative Report for the 2015 Session on

Bills of Interest to the United Veterans Committee of Colorado

The following report contains the final action on all bills of interest to the United Veterans Committee that were considered by the 2015 session of the General Assembly, including the date that the Governor has signed into law those bills that passed the legislature.

The report is organized in three sections:

- I. Bills that have been signed into law.
- II. House and Senate Joint Resolutions (HJR and SJR).
- III. Bills that died in a committee (PI'd – Postponed Indefinitely).

The UVC voted to support 13 bills and 12 resolutions, to monitor 2 bills, and to oppose 1 bill. 12 of the 13 bills the UVC supported were passed by the legislature, and have been signed into law by the Governor's signature – a 92% success rate. The only bill supported by the UVC that did not pass was a late introduced bill that was PI'd by a committee due to its fiscal impact in the next to last day of the session. All 12 resolutions supported by the UVC were adopted by both houses, and do not require the signature of the Governor. The one bill that was opposed by the UVC was PI'd, so the UVC's position prevailed. One of the bills where the UVC took a monitor position passed the legislature, and the other was PI'd. In summary, of the 26 bills and resolutions the UVC voted to support or oppose, the UVC position was supported in 25 of them. Overall for the legislature, 682 bills were introduced, and 367 ended up passing both houses – or 54%. The 92% success rate for bills the UVC supported is evidence of the bipartisan support for issues affecting veterans in both houses of the legislature.

The UVC's position for each bill or resolution is noted in this report.

I. Bills That Have Been Signed Into Law:

BILL [HB15-1026](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF MILITARY LICENSE PLATES WITH AN IDENTIFYING FIGURE NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC THAT THE HOLDER MAY USE RESERVED PARKING FOR PEOPLE WITH

DISABILITIES.

Sponsors: ROUPE / TODD

Currently, a person may be issued a disabled veteran's license plate with the identifying figure that allows the holder to use reserved parking for people with disabilities. The bill allows any military license plate to have an identifying figure if the applicant demonstrates a physical impairment affecting mobility.

Status

05/27/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1030](#) - UVC Position: Monitor

CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS PILOT PROGRAM.

Sponsors: LANDGRAF / CROWDER

The bill requires the department of labor and employment (department) to administer an employment services for veterans pilot program (program). The program must provide follow-along job services for up to 20 veterans including:

- * Job retention services;
- * Mediation services between the employer and the employee;
- * Job mentoring skills and guidance to employees; and
- * Advice and support concerning career advancement. The executive director of the department is required to use a competitive request for proposal process to select a local nonprofit agency to contract with to implement and operate the program. Specific criteria are required of the nonprofit agency in order to implement and operate the program. The nonprofit agency is required to report measurable outcomes for evaluation by the department. The program is repealed January 1, 2018.

Status

05/27/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1045](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE AMOUNT A VETERAN MUST PAY TO ENTER STATE PARKS.

Sponsors: RYDEN / CROWDER

Currently, the parks and wildlife commission may issue rules permitting veterans free entrance to state parks or recreation areas one day per year. As amended by the Senate and readopted by the House, the bill requires the commission to promulgate rules allowing veterans free entrance to state parks or recreation areas any day during the month of August. \$150,000 General Fund was appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources to cover the estimated amount of lost revenues from entrance fees.

Status

05/27/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1052](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE A GRANT FROM THE MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF FUND.

Sponsors: CARVER / TODD

Under current law, to be eligible to receive a grant from the military family relief fund, a member of the Colorado National Guard or a reservist must be on active military duty for a minimum of 30 days on involuntary mobilization orders or called to state active duty by executive order of the governor. The bill removes the requirement that the member's or reservist's mobilization orders must be involuntary.

Status

03/11/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1130](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING VOTING BY MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, EXTENDING CERTAIN DEADLINES THAT GOVERN THE CONDUCT OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SUCH VOTERS HAVE THE SAME ABILITY TO VOTE IN SUCH ELECTIONS AS THEY DO IN FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY ELECTIONS.

Sponsors: NORDBERG / GARCIA

The federal "Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act" (UOCAVA) and the state "Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act" (UMOVA) provide procedural requirements for the conduct of federal and state elections that help ensure that United States military personnel and American civilians living abroad can vote in such elections. Because county elections are coordinated with state elections, UOCAVA and UMOVA also indirectly help ensure that such military personnel and civilians can vote in county elections. The bill extends certain deadlines that govern the conduct of municipal elections to ensure that such military personnel and civilians have similar ability to vote in municipal elections as they do in federal, state, and county elections.

Status

05/27/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1136](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATES WITH THE IDENTIFYING FIGURE AUTHORIZING THE USE OF PARKING PRIVILEGES THAT MAY BE ISSUED TO A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.

Sponsors: NAVARRO / WOODS

Currently, a qualified person may be issued only one disabled veteran license plate with the figure that authorizes the use of parking privileges, and the person may be issued a parking placard. The bill allows a person the option to be issued 2 of these license plates, or one plate and one placard.

Status

05/04/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1181](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE EXEMPTION FROM THE STATE INCOME TAX OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY INCOME EARNED BY A RESIDENT INDIVIDUAL IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES.

Sponsors: KEYSER / CROWDER

Federal law allows active duty military service members to choose their state of residency for state income tax purposes. The military income of a nonresident is not subject to Colorado income tax. A Colorado resident in the armed forces (resident service person) is currently exempt from Colorado state income tax only if he or she is stationed outside the country for 305 or more days per year and elects not to file a tax return or if he or she is deployed in a war zone. As introduced, the bill would have exempted all military income of a resident service person from Colorado state income tax for 5 tax years commencing with the 2016 income tax year. Because of fiscal concerns, the bill was amended to specify that active duty military personnel whose home of record is Colorado, but who changed their residency while in the military, can change their residency back to Colorado after January 1, 2016 and their military income will not be subject to Colorado income tax.

Status

05/27/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1215](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING IN-STATE TUITION CLASSIFICATION FOR DEPENDENTS OF ACTIVE DUTY

MILITARY MEMBERS WHO HAVE ATTENDED SCHOOL IN COLORADO.

Sponsors: PRIOLA / JOHNSTON

The bill permits in-state tuition status to the dependents of active duty members of the armed forces of the United States who spent a significant amount of time in elementary or secondary school in Colorado.

Status

05/04/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1294](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING ALIGNMENT OF STATE LAW REGARDING IN-STATE TUITION CLASSIFICATION WITH THE FEDERAL "VETERANS ACCESS, CHOICE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014".

Sponsors: LEE / TODD

The bill requires state institutions of higher education (institutions) to classify as in-state students for tuition purposes a "covered individual" as defined in federal law pursuant to the "Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014" (act). Under the act, qualifying veterans, spouses, and dependents must be granted in-state tuition, or the institution may be disqualified from participating in the post-9/11 and Montgomery GI bill programs. To be classified as an in-state student for tuition purposes, a covered individual must reside in Colorado while attending a state institution and must be enrolled in courses with federal educational assistance benefits. Students classified pursuant to this section are eligible to receive the college opportunity fund stipend.

Status

05/01/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [HB15-1315](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.

Sponsors: RYDEN / CROWDER

Under current law, out of any moneys appropriated by the general assembly to the division of veterans affairs for veterans affairs purposes, the division is authorized to issue vouchers for the semiannual payment to the general fund of each county, to be disbursed upon the authority of the county commissioners thereof, an amount equal to the amount the county commissioners may have authorized to be disbursed out of other moneys in the county general fund for such purposes. The bill states that such moneys are appropriated to the division for the specific purpose of providing support to county veterans service officers. The bill also states that the division shall annually establish the rate of state-funded payments for full-time and part-time county veterans service officers based on the available appropriation by the general assembly; except that, if a county is receiving payments for a veterans service office established for adjacent counties, the payment shall be the total of the semiannual payments for the counties that have jointly formed the veterans service office.

Status

05/22/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [SB15-205](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE UTILIZATION OF VETERANS' FIRE CORPS PROGRAMS BY THE DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

Sponsors: ROBERTS / KEYSER

The bill states legislative findings concerning the increasing severity of wildfires in Colorado, the scarcity of firefighting crews during the periods when fires often occur, the availability of post-9/11 era veterans to help if needed, and the importance of providing employment and training to these veterans in natural resource management and wildland fire control. The bill defines key terms and authorizes the division of

fire prevention and control to use moneys in the wildfire preparedness fund to create or sustain firefighting units consisting primarily of post-9/11 era veterans.

Status

05/12/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [SB15-226](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO QUALIFY FOR A LICENSE TO TAKE WILDLIFE.

Sponsors: SONNENBERG / VIGIL

Currently, a person has to obtain a hunter education certificate to be issued a license to hunt in Colorado. To get the certificate, the person needs to take a 10-hour hunter education course. The commission may create various ways to meet this requirement, including testing out of it or getting an apprentice certificate. A veteran may obtain a certificate without taking the course if the veteran passes a test. If the division verifies a person's certificate, the person need not carry the certificate while hunting. The bill eliminates the requirement that the hunter education course consist of 10 hours of instruction. The bill also creates an apprentice program that allows a person who is at least 10 years of age to be issued a temporary certificate without hunter education if he or she is accompanied by a mentor who is at least 18 years of age and meets the certification requirements.

Status

05/22/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

BILL [SB15-234](#) - UVC Position: Support those items important to veterans

Sponsors: LAMBERT / HAMNER

CONCERNING THE PROVISION FOR PAYMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, AND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE STATE OF COLORADO FOR AND DURING THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2015.

This is the "Long Bill" which appropriates funding for programs throughout state government. There are multiple programs that provide services and assistance to veterans in several departments. Some of these of special interest to the UVC included: (a) An additional \$466,626 in general fund support for County Veterans Service Officers, making the total funding \$657,280; (b) \$876,770 authorized for the Veterans Trust Fund from the master tobacco settlement; (c) \$1,000,000 for services to veterans through the Veterans Assistance Grant Program; (d) \$536,218 total support for the Western Slope Veterans Cemetery; (e) \$624,877 for support of the Veterans Treatment Courts, including for peer assistance; (f) \$5,000,000 for the purchase of a conservation easement at Buckley; (g) \$2,000,000 in capital construction funding for safety and security enhancements at the Rifle and Florence Veterans Community Living Centers; (h) Although operated as an "enterprise" and therefore shown in the Long Bill for information purposes, \$47,115,630 in funding from a variety of sources for the operation of the Veterans Community Living Centers at Homelake, Aurora (Fitzsimons), Walsenburg, Florence and Rifle.

Status

04/24/2015 Signed into law by the Governor

II. House and Senate Joint Resolutions

BILL [HJR15-1007](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: RYDEN & KEYSER / SCOTT & TODD

CONCERNING MILITARY AND VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY

02/06/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [HJR15-1008](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: ESGAR & NAVARRO / GARCIA & ULIBARRI

CONCERNING REMEMBERING THE U.S.S. PUEBLO

02/06/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [HJR15-1009](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: PRIMAVERA & NEVILLE P. / LAMBERT & TODD

CONCERNING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD AND JORDAN

02/13/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [HJR15-1010](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: FIELDS & CARVER / CROWDER & TODD

CONCERNING HONORING COLORADO SERVES

02/06/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [HJR15-1011](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: MELTON & LANDGRAF / BALMER & HEATH

CONCERNING HONORING FALLEN SOLDIERS

02/06/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [HJR15-1012](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: KEYSER & DANIELSON / JAHN

CONCERNING RENAMING A SECTION OF COLORADO HIGHWAY 93 FOR SGT. DAVID BALDWIN

02/17/2015 Adopted by House and Senate

BILL [SJR15-008](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: CROWDER / NAVARRO

CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATION ON "AGENT ORANGE" SERVICES AND RESEARCH

03/27/2015 Adopted by Senate and House

BILL [SJR15-014](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: CROWDER / VIGIL

CONCERNING THE NAMING OF THE COSTILLA COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

03/27/2015 Adopted by Senate and House

BILL [SJR15-019](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: TODD & LAMBERT / ROSENTHAL & NORDBERG

CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 23, 2015 AS COLORADO AEROSPACE DAY

03/23/2015 Adopted by Senate and House

BILL [SJR15-026](#) - UVC Position: Support

Sponsors: MARBLE & GARCIA / LEB SOCK & NEVILLE P.

CONCERNING RECOGNIZING THE MARINE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

04/20/2015 Adopted by Senate and House

III. Bills that were Postponed Indefinitely in Committee:

BILL [HB15-1005](#) - UVC Position: Monitor

CONCERNING FREE ADMISSION TO STATE PARKS FOR VETERANS.

Sponsors: NAVARRO

The bill would have instructed the parks and wildlife commission to promulgate rules allowing veterans free entrance to state parks or recreation areas. The rules may have required the person to show a DD214 form, a veteran's license plate, or a veteran's driver's license or identification card.

Status

01/26/2015 House Committee on State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Postpone Indefinitely

BILL [HB15-1114](#) - UVC Position: Oppose

CONCERNING A PROHIBITION AGAINST ASSISTANCE BY THE STATE, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ANY MEMBER OF THE COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD SERVING IN HIS OR HER OFFICIAL CAPACITY, WITH ENFORCEMENT OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAWS RELATING TO INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, AND DETENTION OF INDIVIDUALS THAT WERE INITIALLY ENACTED IN THE FEDERAL "NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012".

Sponsors: SAINE / WOODS

The bill would have prohibited a state agency, a political subdivision of the state, an employee of a state agency or political subdivision of the state acting in his or her official capacity, or a member of the Colorado National Guard serving in his or her official capacity from aiding an agency of the armed forces of the United States in any investigation, prosecution, or detention of any person pursuant to section 1021 or 1022 of the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012" or any substantially similar successor provision of federal law if such aid would place the entity in violation of any provision of the United States constitution, the Colorado constitution, or Colorado state law. The bill would have required the criminal prosecution of any individual who violated the prohibition, pursuant to any applicable provisions of the "Colorado Criminal Code", including, but not limited to, provisions that prohibit assault, battery, kidnapping, and homicide.

Status

03/23/2015 Senate Committee on State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Postpone Indefinitely

BILL [HB15-1336](#) - UVC Position: Support

CONCERNING THE "COLORADO VETERANS' SERVICE TO CAREER PILOT PROGRAM", AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, CREATING A GRANT PROGRAM THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO AID WORK FORCE CENTERS IN SUPPORTING VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES SEEKING NEW EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS.

Sponsors: LEE / CROWDER

The bill would have allowed one or more work force centers selected by the department of labor and employment (department) to participate in a grant program to develop and expand programs to provide work force development-related services specifically tailored for veterans and their spouses. The work force centers that applied to the grant program established by the department must submit an application that describes the current services provided, states how the grant money would allow for the expansion of services, and describes the businesses or other organizations that the work force centers will partner with to provide services. The work force centers selected by the department would have reported on the program to the director of the department who shall relay the information to the state, veterans, and military affairs committees of the senate and the house of representatives. The bill would have appropriated \$500,000 from the general fund to the department for the grant program. The program would have been subject to a future repeal, effective January 1, 2018.

Status

05/05/2015 Senate Committee on Appropriations Postpone Indefinitely