

128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 1441

H.P. 996

House of Representatives, April 13, 2017

An Act To Create Veteran-friendly Workplaces

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

R(+ B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

Presented by Representative COLLINGS of Portland. Cosponsored by Senator CARSON of Cumberland and Representatives: CASÁS of Rockport, DEVIN of Newcastle, GOLDEN of Lewiston, PICCHIOTTI of Fairfield, PRESCOTT of Waterboro, Senators: BELLOWS of Kennebec, CARPENTER of Aroostook, DOW of Lincoln.

1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §605 is enacted to read:

3 §605. Veterans in the workplace

4 An employer, as defined in section 603, subsection 1, paragraph A, shall allow an 5 employee who is a veteran, as defined in section 877, subsection 3, to take paid leave to 6 attend scheduled appointments at a medical facility operated by the United States 7 Veterans Administration. The employee shall make reasonable efforts to consult with the 8 employer before scheduling such an appointment in order to accommodate, so far as is 9 reasonable, the needs of the employer. The employer may require reasonable advance 10 notice and verification from the veteran of such an appointment. For purposes of this section, "paid leave" means time away from work for which an employee receives 11 12 compensation, including but not limited to sick time or other paid time, and that results in 13 no economic loss to the employee.

14 Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §1407 is enacted to read:

15 §1407. Veteran-friendly workplace recognition

16The department shall recognize employers in the State whose workplaces have been17certified as veteran-friendly workplaces by the Department of Defense, Veterans and18Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services pursuant to Title 37-B,19section 516, subsection 2.

20 Sec. 3. 37-B MRSA §516 is enacted to read:

21 §516. Veteran-friendly Workplace Program established

22 The Veteran-friendly Workplace Program is established in the bureau to encourage 23 employers to establish veteran-friendly workplaces and to provide assistance and training to employers in the State for that purpose. As used in this section, "veteran-friendly 24 25 workplace" means a place of employment that, through policies and a workplace 26 environment, recognizes the ways in which skills and training acquired through veterans' 27 military service and education are translatable into workforce productivity and that 28 accommodates challenges facing military service veterans, including, but not limited to, service-connected disabilities. 29

- **1. Training.** The director shall conduct regular training sessions for employers who
 voluntarily decide to establish veteran-friendly workplaces that include but are not
 limited to providing information regarding:
- A. Recognizing skills acquired during military service that translate into desirable
 skills in the workplace;
- 35 B. Understanding and recognizing the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder;
- 36 <u>C. Understanding military culture and the challenges of entering the workforce upon</u>
 37 <u>separation from the military; and</u>

D. Other topics the director determines would be helpful in encouraging a veteran-friendly workplace.

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2. Certification. The director shall establish criteria, to be used in certifying a
 workplace as a veteran-friendly workplace, applicable to employers of various sizes and
 in various industries.

SUMMARY

7 This bill establishes a program within the Department of Defense, Veterans and 8 Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services to encourage employers in the State to establish veteran-friendly workplaces. The bill provides criteria for certifying 9 a workplace as a veteran-friendly workplace and requires the Director of the Bureau of 10 Maine Veterans' Services to conduct regular trainings for employers who voluntarily 11 decide to establish such a workplace. The bill also directs the Department of Labor to 12 establish a manner for recognizing employers whose workplaces have been certified as 13 veteran-friendly workplaces. 14

This bill also requires an employer to allow an employee who is a veteran to take paid leave to attend scheduled appointments at a medical facility operated by the United States Veterans Administration. The employee must make reasonable efforts to consult with the employer before scheduling such an appointment in order to accommodate, so far as is reasonable, the needs of the employer. The employer may require reasonable advance notice and verification from the veteran of such an appointment.