



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage

GOVERNOR

21 June 2017

The 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the State of Maine  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature,

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1441, "An Act To Create Veteran-friendly Workplaces."

My administration has made meeting the needs of veterans and attracting them to settle and work in our state a priority. I recognize the need of many of our returning veterans to access health services at the VA and how critical that access is for veterans with a service-connected disability.

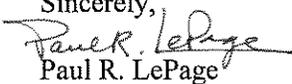
The deteriorating state of the healthcare system for our returning veterans provided through the federal Department of Veteran's Affairs is a national embarrassment. Appointments are hard to schedule, and many of the veterans are forced to travel quite a distance from home or work to Togus to receive care, rather than be able to access services conveniently in their communities. These are the problems this bill seeks to address by mandating that employers of all sizes grant unlimited sick time to veterans so they can travel to scheduled appointments.

State law should not be trying to fix the problems created by the federal government's inadequate and disgraceful management of their own programs. Instead of solving the problems with the VA and ensuring our veterans receive convenient, high-quality care close to home—which requires a federal solution—this bill mandates our employers of all sizes provide unlimited sick leave for veterans. Although employers with fewer than 25 employees are only mandated to provide such leave if given a two-week notice, there is no exemption for small businesses.

If a business has three employees, and one worker is on maternity leave, one wants to take a week off for a honeymoon and the third is a veteran who has scheduled a medical appointment with two weeks' notice during the same week the employee is requesting the honeymoon, this law would require the employer either to deny the honeymoon leave request or to close the business while the veteran is out. That is an unreasonable burden to place on employers, and one that might actually discourage the hiring of veterans—the opposite of what the title of this bill purports to do. We should not be taking any action that could discourage veteran hires.

If this bill were amended to provide employers with reasonable exemptions to deny this medical leave in limited circumstances, as does our successful law granting leave for victims of domestic violence in Title 26 §850, I could then support this bill.

For this reason I am returning LD 1441 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,  
  
Paul R. LePage  
Governor



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