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Neutral Background Information on HB 2418

House Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee

Thursday, January 26, 2012

Presented by Brad Hoff, Senior Auditor, Legislative Post Audit

Thank you Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I am here to present neutral background information related to House Bill 2418. In February 2011, Legislative Post Audit released an audit entitled "*State Hiring Practices: Determining Whether Requirements Related to Veterans' Preferences Are Being Met*" to the Legislative Post Audit Committee. The audit looked at whether selected State agencies were following the veterans' preference law in the hiring process.

Kansas' veterans' preference law provides that a verified veteran who applies for a classified State or local government job should be interviewed for the job if the veteran meets the minimum and preferred qualifications of the job. However, it doesn't guarantee the veteran the job. Also, the veterans' preference law requires the hiring agency to notify veterans who weren't hired within 30 days of the job being filled. The law requires the notification to be made by certified mail.

During audit fieldwork, agency officials expressed concerns about the cost of mailing certified letters to veterans who weren't hired. We estimated State agencies spent between \$10,000 to \$18,000 in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 on postage to mail certified letters to veterans who weren't hired. Agency officials also expressed concerns about the time required to prepare, mail and document the letters. In an effort to help State agencies be more cost-effective, the audit recommended the Legislative Post Audit Committee consider introducing legislation to eliminate the statutory requirement that State agencies mail certified letters to verified veteran applicants who weren't hired.

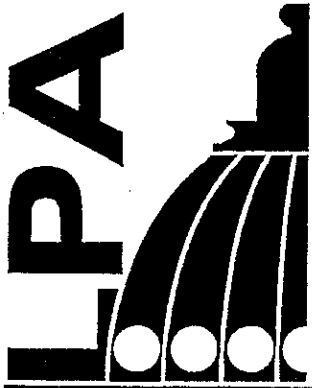
In response to the recommendation, the Legislative Post Audit Committee introduced House Bill 2418. The proposed bill would eliminate the certified mail requirement and allow such notices to be sent by standard or electronic mail.

This concludes my presentation. Thank you and I will stand for questions.

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm

Date: JAN 26, 2012

Attachment #: 1



Legislative Post Audit Performance Audit Report Highlights

State Hiring Practices:
Determining Whether Requirements Related To
Veterans' Preferences Are Being Met

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2011

Audit Concern

The 2008 Legislature amended Kansas' veterans' preference law and directed the Legislative Division of Post Audit to conduct an audit of that law by the start of the 2011 legislative session.

Other Relevant Facts & Findings for the Question

State law requires eligible veterans who meet the minimum and preferred qualifications for a State classified job to be offered an interview.

Recent changes to the veterans' preference statute have expanded the eligibility criteria and clarified the law. These changes include:

- Clarified the definition of a veteran
- Clarified that the law applied to only State and local government classified positions
- Required State and local job notice openings to indicate whether the job is a veterans' preference eligible position
- Required State and local governments to notify veterans who weren't hired within 30 days of the job being filled

Veterans applied for nearly 1,500 State jobs in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Overall, about 8% of those jobs were filled by a veteran.

**Estimated Cost Savings:
Potentially up to \$9,000 per year**

AUDIT QUESTION: Are State agencies following the requirements of State law and regulations related to granting a preference to veterans in the hiring process?

AUDIT ANSWER and KEY FINDINGS:

- Of 426 applications reviewed, we identified only two instances where veterans weren't interviewed when they should have been. In addition, we found no evidence of veterans receiving only "token" interviews.
- Most veterans who weren't interviewed didn't meet minimum and preferred qualifications for the job, or had submitted incomplete application materials. A few veterans weren't interviewed because they withdrew from the interview process.
- We identified several smaller issues related to mailing certified letters to veteran candidates who weren't hired and processing applications.
 - We couldn't conclude whether agencies mailed a certified letter to each veterans' preference applicant within 30 days of the job being filled, as required by State law.
 - Agency officials expressed concerns that mailing certified letters to veteran applicants who weren't hired is expensive and time consuming.
 - Finally, the veterans' preference approval process, as designed, could cause a veteran not to be shown on the applicant summary sheet as a verified veteran.
- Overall, it appears State agencies have made a good effort to comply with Kansas veterans' preference law.

We Recommended

- We recommended that the Legislature consider eliminating the requirement that State agencies mail certified letters to veterans who aren't hired.
- We recommended the Division of Personnel Services develop guidance for agencies to address our findings with the interview process.

Agency Response: Overall, the agencies agreed with the report's findings and recommendations.

**DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR
IMPROVED GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY OR COST SAVINGS?**

If you have an idea to share with us, send it to ideas@lpa.ks.gov, or write to us at the address shown. We will pass along the best ones to the Legislative Post Audit Committee.

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