

STATE SENATOR • JIM BARCIA • 31ST DISTRICT

Barcia Press Release

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BARCIA, ESPINOZA MEASURE TO PROTECT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS HEADED TO GOVERNOR

LANSING – Senate Bill 192, sponsored by Senator Jim Barcia (D-Bay City), which provides additional protections for the reemployment of military veterans, is headed to Governor Granholm for signature. The bill, which is the product of collaboration with Representative John Espinoza (D-Croswell), unanimously passed both the House and the Senate.

“This is a tremendous demonstration of support and respect on behalf of our state for our courageous veterans,” Sen. Barcia said. “My colleagues and I care deeply about the welfare of our veterans and their families. These young men and women should be praised, not penalized, upon return from honorably serving their country.”

Michigan law currently considers violation of the reemployment statute as a misdemeanor and a victimized veteran has no compensatory recourse. SB 192 allows veterans who have met all the requirements to seek reinstatement and reasonable attorney fees through the courts. The bill amends Michigan Public Act 133 to bring state law in line with federal law.

“The honorable men and women who are risking their lives to fight for our freedom should not have to worry about whether they will have a job when they come home,” said Rep. Espinoza who served as a U.S. Army squad leader in Vietnam as part of a distinguished military career. “We must help our veterans have the smoothest transition back into civilian life as possible, and that includes getting back to work so they can support their families. This plan is part of Michigan's commitment to treat our veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned.”

The bill further amends the statute to require an employer to reemploy an employee following service if provided written notice within 45 days of release or within 90 days if the length of service was for more than 180 days. Previously notice was required within 15 days. It also requires reemployment be in a comparable position with comparable pay.

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