

Memo

To: Veterans Affairs Committee
From: Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director
Date: February 17, 2015
Re: **SB 51** AN ACT CREATING A SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FOR DISABLED VETERAN CONTRACTORS, **HB 5952** AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PREFERENCE IN THE AWARD OF STATE CONTRACTS FOR VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES and **HB 5954** AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FOR DISABLED VETERAN CONTRACTORS.

You have several bills before your committee today regarding providing veterans a preference in contracting or creating a set-aside for them. We would remind members of the committee that absent a completed disparity study any change in, or addition to the set-aside law is problematic. While those bills are being fully drafted there is a stark problem confronting veterans right now.

Often we hear of employers refusing to hire veterans because of a perceived belief that the vet may have PTSD or other mental or emotional issues that could pose a problem or potential threat in the workplace. The other primary form of employment discrimination occurs when employers do not want to accept the very real possibility of having employees who serve in the National Guard or Reserves called up for duty.

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities has proposed legislation to the Judiciary Committee that would classify veterans as a protected class in employment, housing, credit transactions and in places of public accommodation. Being protected against discrimination will provide veterans with the additional safeguards that their service to this country warrants today.

We hope the members of this Committee will support that proposal.