

State Workforce Development Council Wants to Hire Transitioning Military Members and Spouses

By WAYNE YOSHIOKA • JUL 18, 2018



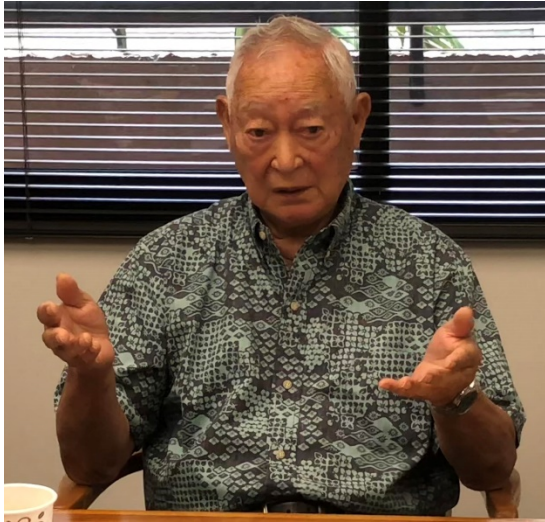
Workforce Development Council Military and Veteran's Affairs Committee.

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Military service members and their families make up more than 10 percent of the Hawai'i's population and the state wants to hire those leaving the military to fill critical shortage jobs.

The Workforce Development Council Military and Veteran's Affairs Committee is working to help service members and their spouses fill jobs in Hawai'i. Major General Edward "Rick" Richardson, a former Air Force fighter pilot, chairs the committee.

"The military brings in a lot of skills and talent that is not available in great numbers in the civilian community. Some of the obvious areas are aviation, aircraft mechanics, pilots, computers, IT, drivers, security. There's a lot of areas."



Retired Maj. Gen. Rick Richardson chairs the committee
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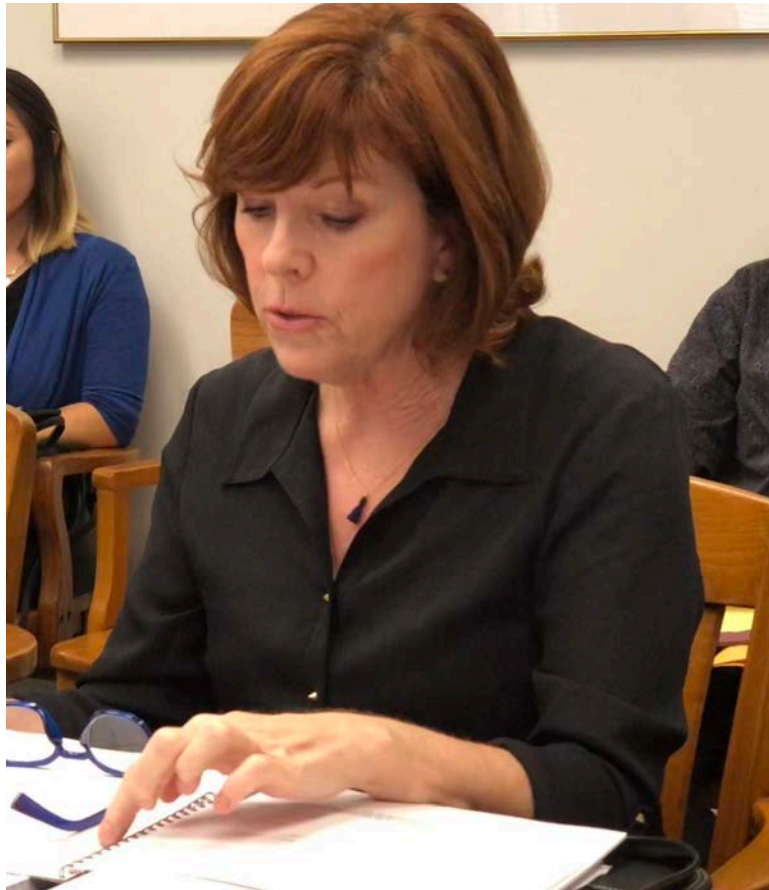
But, Richardson says, Hawai'i's high cost of living is a deterrent for many transitioning service members. Bridgette Komine, a retired Air National Guard recruiter, says the cost of housing is probably the most daunting.



Bridgette Komine
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“All of sudden, they move off base. They don’t have any cognizance of the fact that that house that they had been living in, with their utilities paid, is probably costing the government 25-hundred. That’s a conservative estimate.”

Komine says living wage jobs are critical. The University of Hawai’i’s 10 campuses has hundreds of job opportunities. Mary Perreira is the Equal Employment Opportunity Affirmative Action Program director for UH Community Colleges. She says a big challenge for UH selection committees is understanding military terminology.



Mary Perreira
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“It’s helping committees to understand military jargon. So working with a recruiter or transition person I think would help us tremendously.”

Army-Hawai'i Transition Services Manager, Mike Bormann, says there are other barriers, like soldiers who perceive state jobs as exclusionary.

“The State of Hawaii appears to be a really close-knit family-centric organization and outsiders, people who



Mike Bormann

move to the island, either they're military or they're not, kinda get that perception that it's a tough nut to crack. That it's hard to get at. If you don't know someone, you're not gonna get the job.”

Soldiers in Hawai'i also participate in intern and apprentice programs six months prior to discharge or retirement. Tamara Brethouwer is the Army Career Skills Program Administrator.



Tamara Brethouwer

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“On the island we have technical programs, IT programs, programs that offer business management, warehouse logistics and individual program options as well.”

But, Committee Chair Richardson, says there are policy barriers that must be addressed. He doesn’t blame anyone but says he received a complaint about military spouses who pursue teaching jobs.

“The spouses got interviewed and qualified and got hired on right away. But, when they get assigned to a specific assignment, they have to start at the bottom like a brand new hire. Whereas, some of these persons have 10, 15 years of experience. So in effect, they end up taking an administrative job or not even becoming a teacher and taking a job somewhere else where it pays better.”

The State Department of Education will brief the committee September 19th.
Wayne Yoshioka, HPR News.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MILITARY AND VETERAN'S AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MAJ GEN (RETIRED) RICK RICHARDSON

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