

# 2018 AG REQUEST LEGISLATION

## EXPANDING PROTECTIONS FOR MILITARY CONSUMERS

### PROBLEM

Military service members, including those serving in the National Guard and Reserves, often experience significant upheaval when they are called to active duty or are relocated. These abrupt changes can have major impacts on routine financial commitments military service members had in civilian life.

A number of everyday service contracts are not covered by existing law. This can leave military service members stuck paying for contracts they cannot use because of their military service obligations.

### BACKGROUND

The existing federal and state versions of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) provide various financial and legal protections for military service members ordered to active duty. These laws allow men and women serving their state and country to focus on their military responsibilities without adverse consequences. Examples of existing SCRA protections are provisions allowing the early termination of residential and automobile leases, and cell phone contract termination.

A number of states have enacted expanded consumer protections, including Arizona, Indiana, Minnesota, New York, and Oregon.

This legislation passed the Washington State Senate and House of Representatives unanimously in 2017.

### LEGISLATION (SB 6017 / HB 1056)

To prevent military consumers from getting stuck with contracts they can't use when they are called to active duty or have to relocate, this legislation amends the state Service Members Civil Relief Act to allow a military service member to cancel or suspend a service contract for:

- A gym membership or other health studio services;
- Internet services;
- Subscription television services;
- Telecommunications services; and
- Satellite radio services.

The legislation prevents a military service member from being charged penalties or fees when canceling or suspending a contract. The bill also permits the reinstatement of the contract under previous or generally favorable terms. In addition, the legislation adjusts the definition of "service member" so the protections cover active-duty military personnel, as well as those serving in the National Guard and Reserves and it makes a technical change clarifying existing Attorney General enforcement authority.



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### SPONSORS:

**Sen. Fain (R-47)**  
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Sen. McCoy (D-38)  
Sen. Frockt (D-46)  
Sen. Hasegawa (D-11)  
Sen. Saldaña (D-37)  
Sen. Sheldon (D-35)  
Sen. Zeiger (R-25)  
Sen. Rolfe (D-23)  
Sen. Liias (D-21)  
Sen. Keiser (D-33)  
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Sen. O'Ban (R-28)  
Sen. Kuderer (D-48)

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Rep. Sawyer (D-29)

### SUPPORTED BY:

- Department of Defense State Liaison Office
- Veterans Legislative Coalition  
WA State Bar Association
- Washington Association for Justice
- Washington State Veterans Bar Association
- WA Dept. of Veterans Affairs