

## Paid Military Leave for Public Employees in Washington

By First Lieutenant Tara Buckles<sup>2</sup>, USMCR

1.18: USERRA and Other Laws

2.0: Paid Leave

Revised Code of Washington, section 38.40.060 provides 21 days of paid military leave for employees of the state and its political subdivisions:

- (1) Every officer and employee of the state or of any county, city, or other political subdivision thereof who is a member of the Washington national guard or of the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps reserve of the United States, or of any organized reserve or armed forces of the United States shall be entitled to and shall be granted military leave of absence from such employment for a period not exceeding twenty-one days during each year beginning October 1st and ending the following September 30th in order that the person may report for required military duty, training, or drills including those in the national guard under Title 10 U.S.C., Title 32 U.S.C., or state active status.
- (2) Such military leave of absence shall be in addition to any vacation or sick leave to which the officer or employee might otherwise be entitled, and shall not involve any loss of efficiency rating, privileges, or pay.
- (3) During the period of military leave, the officer or employee shall receive from the state, or the county, city, or other political subdivision, his or her normal pay.

---

<sup>1</sup> I invite the reader's attention to [www.roa.org/lawcenter](http://www.roa.org/lawcenter). You will find approximately 1500 "Law Review" articles about the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and other laws that are especially pertinent to those who serve our country, along with a detailed Subject Index, to facilitate finding articles about very specific topics. The Reserve Officers Association (ROA) initiated this column in 1997. In our "state laws" section, we have an article for each state about the state laws that grant paid military leave and other benefits, over and above USERRA, to employees of the state and (often) to employees of the state's political subdivisions.

<sup>2</sup> Tara, a life member of ROA, is a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Tara holds a B.S. in Business Administration with a second major in Public Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She graduated cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in May 2022 and sat for the Texas bar exam. After passing the bar exam, she will go on active duty in the Marine Corps. Military title is used for identification only. The views expressed in this article are the views of the author, and not necessarily the views of the Marine Corps, the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or of the U.S. Government.

(4)

- (a) The officer or employee shall be charged military leave only for days that he or she is scheduled to work for the state or the county, city, or other political subdivision.
- (b) If the officer or employee is scheduled to work a shift that begins on one calendar day and ends on the next calendar day, the officer or employee shall be charged military leave for only the first calendar day. If the officer or employee is scheduled to work a shift that begins on one calendar day and ends later than the next calendar day, the officer or employee shall be charged military leave for each calendar day except the calendar day on which the shift ends.<sup>3</sup>

The statute makes clear that the individual should be charged for a day of paid military leave only for a day when the individual would have worked in the civilian job but for the military duty on that day.

#### **Access the Revised Code of Washington on Your Own**

We do our best to keep these state law articles up-to-date and provide the most relevant sections of the applicable statute for you to review. Nonetheless, we still recommend you consult the most recent version of the law to make sure nothing has changed from what we discussed in this article. You can find a public version of the entirety of the Revised Code of Washington for yourself online, for free, at <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>. To access Section 38.40.060 discussed in this article, follow this link:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=38.40>, and then select the HTML or PDF option for the “Military Leave for Public Employees” provision.

#### **Please join or support ROA**

This article is one of 2,300-plus “Law Review” articles available at [www.roa.org/lawcenter](http://www.roa.org/lawcenter). The Reserve Officers Association, now doing business as the Reserve Organization of America (ROA), initiated this column in 1997. New articles are added each month.

ROA is more than a century old—it was established on 10/1/1922 by a group of veterans of “The Great War,” as World War I was then known. One of those veterans was Captain Harry S. Truman. As President, in 1950, he signed our congressional charter. Under that charter, our mission is to advocate for the implementation of policies that provide for adequate national security. For almost a century, we have argued that the Reserve Components, including the National Guard, are a cost-effective way to meet our nation’s defense needs.

Through these articles, and by other means, including amicus curiae (“friend of the court”) briefs that we file in the Supreme Court and other courts, we educate service members, military

---

<sup>3</sup> WASH. REV. CODE ANN. §38.40.060 (LexisNexis 2022).

spouses, attorneys, judges, employers, DOL investigators, ESGR volunteers, congressional and state legislative staffers, and others about the legal rights of service members and about how to exercise and enforce those rights. We provide information to service members, without regard to whether they are members of ROA, but please understand that ROA members, through their dues and contributions, pay the costs of providing this service and all the other great services that ROA provides.

If you are now serving or have ever served in any one of our nation's eight<sup>4</sup> uniformed services, you are eligible for membership in ROA, and a one-year membership only costs \$20 or \$450 for a life membership. Enlisted personnel as well as officers are eligible for full membership, and eligibility applies to those who are serving or have served in the Active Component, the National Guard, or the Reserve. If you are eligible for ROA membership, please join. You can join on-line at [www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org) or call ROA at 800-809-9448.

If you are not eligible to join, please contribute financially, to help us keep up and expand this effort on behalf of those who serve. Please mail us a contribution to:

Reserve Organization of America  
1 Constitution Ave. NE  
Washington, DC 20002<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Congress recently established the United States Space Force as the 8<sup>th</sup> uniformed service.

<sup>5</sup> You can also contribute on-line at [www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org).