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When Sen. Marv Hagedorn, R-Meridian, was transitioning from military duty to civilian life, he saw a slideshow that listed veterans benefits in all 50 states. The list for Idaho stood out.

“There was nothing there,” Hagedorn said. “There were no benefits listed for idaho.”

That was 1994. Since then, the civilian landscape for veterans has gotten better, Hagedorn said. But there's still a lot to be done. Hagedorn, who served in the Navy for 20 years, is one of a handful of sponsors on veterans-focused bills this session. The idea, Hagedorn said, is to reward veterans for their service and attract experienced workers to the state.

Numbers on veteran unemployment vary, but according to a Feb. 1 article by Stars and Stripes, the veteran unemployment rate rose to 7.6 percent in January.

That's something Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter wants to change. On Thursday, his communications director Mark Warbis presented a bill to the House Revenue and Taxation Committee that would, among other things, give a \$1,000 tax credit to employers who add a new position on the payroll and fill that position with a veteran.

The legislation was the governor's idea, Warbis said.

“I think that the governor has been keenly aware of the problem and the concerns of veterans getting employment, which is why he talked about it in the state of the state,” said Jon Hanian, Otter's press secretary. “He called it a national disgrace.”

It's not the only veteran employment bill the Legislature will consider this session.

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helped pass legislation to set up a suicide hotline in Idaho, largely because of the high rate of suicide among veterans in the United States.

This year, he's working with the Department of Health and Welfare on behavioral health services. If passed, Senate Bill 1023 would help set up transitional support networks in communities for veterans readjusting to life in society. The community support networks would also help others transitioning to public life, like those leaving the prison system.

"We want to try and have those support networks in communities," Hagedorn said. "Veterans struggle coming out of a very structured environment into a very unstructured public sector social environment. So when we come home, we're used to being told what color of socks to wear every day.

"We have to get used to making those simple decisions and get comfortable with the thought that it's OK for us to make those decisions and get confident in the fact that we make good decisions."

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