

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2095

C 55 L 91

Synopsis As Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a counseling network for veterans and their families.

By House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives R. Johnson, McLean, Anderson, Jones, Kremen, Braddock, Valle, Wineberry, Franklin, Day, Pruitt, Rayburn, Roland, Spanel and Prentice; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs).

House Committee on State Government
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Individuals exposed to armed conflict during the conduct of a war sometimes suffer long-term psychological and social disorders. Family members of these individuals may suffer stress and trauma as well. Members of the armed services may seek professional counseling and care through the military. Members of the military reserves and the National Guard lose access to many federal counseling programs as soon as they leave active duty.

For several years, the state Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been coordinating a program for treatment of Viet Nam veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). VA reports an increase in incidence of PTSD in Viet Nam veterans concurrent with the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

Summary: The Department of Veterans Affairs will contract with professional counselors to provide an option of direct mental health treatment for war-affected veterans, for soldiers returning from the Persian Gulf, and for their families. VA will expand its existing counseling program for Viet Nam veterans. VA will also work to train mental health professionals about the effects of war-related stress and trauma, and will provide other mental health support services to veterans and their families. VA will coordinate its programs with federal programs and other mental health programs to minimize duplication of services.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0

Senate 43 0

Effective: May 3, 1991