

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SSB 6011**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 5, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Extending veteran's benefits to Desert Storm veterans.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Governmental Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Conner, Rasmussen, Bauer, Jesernig and Oke)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6011 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Barbara Howard (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** January 20, 1992; January 23, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

Several statutes conferring veterans' employment preferences and other benefits rely upon a definition of "veteran" in a general provision under the laws on public employment.

The State Department of Veterans Affairs has interpreted the statute and recent federal laws as broad enough to authorize all regular benefits for veterans of the recent Desert Storm conflict. The benefits are being granted. It has been suggested, however, that the state law should make a more direct reference to Desert Storm to avoid any confusion.

**SUMMARY:**

The general definition of "period of war" is expanded to include the period beginning on August 2, 1990 and ending on an undetermined date, designated as "Desert Storm" or any operation following from it. A similar change is made in the state civil service law with reference to veterans' employment benefits.

The prohibition against a retired veteran with a pension of more than \$500 per month is removed from the veterans' preference provisions in the state civil service law.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This measure is needed for those military personnel, including reservists, who were activated in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, but who were not deployed in the Persian Gulf combat area. The other veterans are already receiving benefits on the basis of parallel federal law.

Deleting the prohibition against retired personnel from receiving state employment preference removes a discriminatory exclusion. Those who chose a military career should be allowed the same preference as veterans who were involuntarily called to duty.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Beau Bergeron, Department of Veterans Affairs; Keith Sherman, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Donald A. Ice, Thurston County Veterans Coalition