

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4031

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Brief Description: Petitioning for a legal suit on behalf of American Prisoners of War and personnel that are missing in action.

Sponsors: Representatives Brough, Heavey, Van Luven, Moak, Silver, Reams, Jones, Fuhrman, Linville, Campbell, Horn, Wineberry, Conway and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 2, 1994, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: There is continuing controversy over whether American servicemen who were listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action are being held against their will in the Southeast Asian nations of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia). United States Defense Department documents pertaining to servicemen listed as prisoners of war and missing in action have not all been declassified. There are still 55 servicemen from Washington State who have been missing and unaccounted-for since the Southeast Asian conflict.

Summary of Bill: The Senate and the House of Representatives request that the state Attorney General file an action in the United States Supreme Court against the government of the United States and the representatives of the governments of Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Russia and the People's Republic of China, alleging violation of the civil rights of the people of the state of Washington and constitutional violations regarding the Washington servicemen still missing. In the suit, the Attorney General will demand that the Department of Defense, the intelligence agencies and the foreign governments named turn over all

documents concerning the missing servicemen. The other 49 states are urged to join this action.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: This joint memorial requests that the Attorney General enter into a lawsuit to obtain information concerning those servicemen still missing from the conflict in Southeast Asia. There is evidence that not all servicemen have been adequately accounted for and information regarding their fate may still exist.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Jean Marie Brough, prime sponsor (pro).