

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2227

As Passed House:

June 4, 2001

Title: An act relating to establishing the eastern Washington veterans' home.

Brief Description: Establishing the eastern Washington veterans' home.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Ahern, Gombosky, Schoesler, Wood, Benson, Haigh, Schindler, Conway, Cox, Reardon, D. Schmidt, Talcott, Campbell and Bush; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/11/01, 4/18/01 [DPS].

First Special Session

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 5/8/01, 84-0.

Second Special Session

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 6/4/01, 89-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes an Eastern Washington veterans' home.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Benson, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Dunshee, Fromhold, Gombosky, Grant, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Lambert, Linville, Mastin, Mulliken, Pearson, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke and Talcott.

Staff: Linda Brooks (786-7153).

Background:

The Washington Department of Veterans' Affairs (WDVA) operates two state veterans' homes that provide long-term care for veterans and their spouses. The homes are the Soldiers' Home at Orting and the Veterans' Home at Retsil. Both homes are funded through a combination of funds that includes state general funds, per diem payments from the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs, Medicaid payments, and contributions from residents' incomes.

Summary of Bill:

An Eastern Washington veterans' home is established. The Legislature intends that the state general fund shall not provide support in future biennia for the Eastern Washington home, except for amounts required to pay the state share of Medicaid costs. The WDVA is authorized to operate and manage the Eastern Washington veterans' home in the same manner as other state veterans' homes are operated and managed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The veterans' home in Retsil is a seven-hour drive from Spokane. If a veteran from Eastern Washington resides at Retsil, that's a long drive for a family to visit. A needs assessment has been done in the Spokane area. The federal veterans' medical center in Spokane indicates that it placed 78 veterans into long-term care last year. The department also surveyed nursing homes in Spokane and found 181 veterans in Medicaid-subsidized nursing beds.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Ahern, prime sponsor; and John E. Lee and Gary Condra, Department of Veterans' Affairs.