

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5097

As Reported by House Committee On:

State Government

Title: An act relating to displaying flags.

Brief Description: Requiring public entities to display the national league of families' POW/MIA flag.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State & Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, Winsley, Constantine, Hargrove, Oke, Rasmussen and Patterson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/21/02, 2/28/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires public entities to display the POW/MIA flag along with the United States flag and the Washington state flag.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Romero, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott and Schmidt.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Schindler.

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

The flag of the United States and the Washington state flag must be prominently displayed at schools, public buildings, polling places, and in courtrooms. The flag plazas on the east and west capitol campus are designated as the official locations for display of the United States and Washington state flags on the state capitol grounds. The flags of visiting United States governors and dignitaries and other flags may be flown at the discretion of the Governor.

Summary of Bill:

Public entities must display the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag along with the flag of the United States and the Washington state flag on or near the principal building of a public entity on the following days:

- Armed Forces Day, the third Saturday of May;
- Memorial Day, the last Monday in May;
- Flag Day, June 14;
- Independence Day, July 4;
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day; and
- Veterans' Day, November 11.

If the designated day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the POW/MIA flag must be displayed on the preceding Friday.

Upon request, the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee shall provide information to public entities regarding the purchase and display of the flags. Public entities include state, county, city, and town entities.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Available.**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill was approved by the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs. The flag will fly alongside the U.S. and Washington state flags. After the U.S. flag, the POW/MIA flag is the most sacred flag for many people. The demonstration of this flag is a small price to pay to show appreciation for the service provided by 180,000 service personnel still missing from the various wars.

Testimony Against: None.**Testified:** Senator Kastama, prime sponsor; and Jeff McIntyre, National POW/MIA Flag Campaign.