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**State Government Committee**

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**HB 2415**

**Brief Description:** Defining veteran for certain purposes.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Haigh, Talcott, Wallace, Armstrong, Fromhold, Anderson, Uptegrove, Simpson, G., Morrell, Conway and Rockefeller.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Expands the definition of veteran to include merchant mariners who served aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the Department of Defense from June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1953, in Korean territorial waters, or from August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975, in Vietnam territorial waters.

**Hearing Date:** 1/22/04

**Staff:** Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

**Background:**

The definition of veteran is used throughout statute as an eligibility requirement for various benefits, including retirement service credit; admission to the soldiers' and veterans' homes; veterans' scoring preference on civil service exams; free license plates for disabled veterans and prisoners of war; county aid to indigent veterans and families; restrictions on sending veterans or their families to almshouses; and county burial of indigent deceased veterans.

For purposes of these benefits, veteran is defined as a person who has received an honorable discharge or received a discharge for physical reasons with an honorable record and one who has served in at least one of the following capacities:

- as a member in any branch of the armed forces, including the national guard and armed forces reserves;
- as a member of the women's air forces service pilots;
- as a member of the armed forces reserves, national guard, or coast guard and called into service for at least 180 cumulative days;
- as a civil service crew member aboard a U.S. army or naval transport service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946; and
- as a member of the Philippine armed forces/scouts from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945.

**Summary of Bill:**

The definition of veteran is expanded to include a U.S. documented merchant mariner with service aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the Department of Defense, or its agents, during the following periods:

- June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1953, in Korean territorial waters; or
- August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975, in Vietnam territorial waters.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 19, 2004.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.