

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5049

As Reported by House Committee On:

State Government

Title: An act relating to veterans' history awareness month.

Brief Description: Designating veterans' history awareness month.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Eide, Winsley, Franklin, Rasmussen, Stevens, Schmidt, Haugen, Parlette, Carlson, Esser and Sheahan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 3/25/03, 3/28/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- November of each year is known as Veterans' History Awareness Month.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Shabro, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Nixon, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

At 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918, (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month), World War I came to an end. On the first anniversary of the truce, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation eulogizing fallen allied soldiers and referring to November 11 as Armistice Day.

In 1921 an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Similar ceremonies occurred in England and France giving international recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I.

Armistice Day officially received its name in 1926 through a Congressional resolution

and became a national holiday in 1938. It was the hope that World War I was "the war to end all wars." But not long after the holiday was proclaimed, World War II broke out in Europe.

In 1954 President Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day, recognizing the sacrifices of veterans of World War II and Korea in preserving world peace. Since then, Veterans Day has become a day to pay tribute to those who had served America in all wars.

According to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs there are 25 million living veterans, 48 million Americans who have served in the armed forces since 1776, and nearly one million Americans who have died in combat or combat-related events. The 2000 census indicates that there are 670,628 veterans living in the state of Washington.

Summary of Bill:

November of each year is known as Veterans' History Awareness Month. The week in which Veterans' Day occurs is designated as a time for people to celebrate the contributions of veterans to the State of Washington. Educational institutions, public entities, and private organizations are encouraged to designate time for activities in commemoration of the contributions of America's veterans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: In the community of veterans, the winter soldiers carry the torch and advocate for the summer soldiers. It is important to have a platform for veterans' issues. The bill will encourage people to learn the history of veterans and gives a special moment of recognition to all veterans. Having a Veterans' History Awareness Month will also provide an opportunity to learn about the other civic activities that soldiers do, like filling sand bags for flooding rivers. It's not all high technology and high visibility.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Skip Dreps, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Richard Faurr, Vietnam Veterans of America.