

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1261

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to the joint committee on veterans' and military affairs.

Brief Description: Making the joint committee on veterans' and military affairs permanent.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Haigh, Wallace, Campbell, O'Brien, McCoy, Moeller, Kenney, Hasegawa, Green, Lantz, Flannigan, Williams, Dunshee, B. Sullivan, Kilmer, Strow, Upthegrove, Darneille, Springer, Hunt, Sells, P. Sullivan, Tom, Talcott, McCune, Serben, McDonald, Conway, Linville, Kristiansen, Chase, Ormsby, Santos and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 2/2/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies the composition and term limitations of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs (JCVMA) committee's executive committee.
- Removes the expiration date of the JCVMA, making the JCVMA permanent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, Miloscia, Schindler and Sump.

Staff: Hannah Lidman (786-7291).

Background:

Joint Select Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs

In 2000 the Joint Select Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs (JSCVMA) was created. The purpose of the committee was to examine and define issues and make recommendations on programs, laws, and administrative practices affecting veterans and military affairs. The JSCVMA ceased to exist after 1999-2000 biennium.

Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs

In 2001 the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs (JCVMA) was created. The purpose of the JCVMA is to study issues relating to veterans, active military forces, the National Guard, the Reserves, the Military Department, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs. The JCVMA makes recommendations to the Legislature regarding these issues and may create subcommittees to perform its duties. The JCVMA is required to adopt operating rules and procedures.

The JCVMA consists of 16 members, four members from each caucus of the House appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four members from each caucus of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate. The four-member executive committee, representing the majority and minority of each chamber, performs administrative duties assigned to it by the JCVMA.

The JCVMA expires on December 31, 2005.

Summary of Bill:

The four-member executive committee of the JCVMA must have two members from the Senate and two from the House. The executive committee shall appoint one co-chair from among the two Senators and one from among the two Representatives. The co-chairs must be of different political parties. The co-chair terms shall run from the end of the session in which they are appointed until the close of the next regular session in an odd-numbered year.

The expiration date is removed, making the JCVMA permanent.

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: The JCVMA is a valuable and important committee. It deals with serious issues that affect our state such as base closures, veterans, and what happens to families when members of Washington's armed forces leave for and return from conflict. The leadership of the JCVMA should be nonpartisan to foster greater cooperation and it should become permanent so that this re-authorization process does not have to be undertaken every few years. This bill would enable the JCVMA to become more proactive, especially if the committee agrees to meet during session.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; and Dennis Primoli, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.