

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1292

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, March 19, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to establishing the eastern Washington state veterans' cemetery.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the eastern Washington state veterans' cemetery.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Barlow, Ahern, Morrell, Hailey, Seaquist, Schindler, Appleton, Skinner, Williams, McDonald, Hurst, Campbell, Haler, Wood, Moeller, VanDeWege, McCune, Conway and Kenney; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/12/07, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 3/19/07 [DP-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Kline and Pridemore.

**Staff:** Amy Van Horn (786-7784)

**Background:** According to federal Veterans Administration (VA) statistics, there are 140,000 veterans living in Eastern Washington; 37 percent of these live in Spokane County. Washington has one national veterans cemetery, the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent. This cemetery is 280 miles from Spokane. In order to serve this population, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has developed plans for a state veterans cemetery in Spokane County.

The VA provides grants to build veterans cemeteries within 100 miles of major metropolitan areas. These grants pay 100 percent of design, construction, and equipment costs. The state must provide the land and is responsible for operation and maintenance. The state also fronts the design costs; these are reimbursed once the application is approved by the VA.

**Summary of Bill:** The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is authorized to establish a State Veteran's Cemetery in Eastern Washington. All honorably discharged veterans and their spouses are eligible for internment in the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery. The WDVA is granted rule making authority.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This cemetery is a priority for the veterans' community, and will further the state's goal of honoring veterans in their final resting place. The project's design and construction will be funded by the federal Veterans Administration, so it's a good deal for Washington State.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Heidi Audette, Public Relations and Legislative Manager, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.