

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1051

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
State Government & Tribal Affairs

**Title:** An act relating to improving veterans' access to services.

**Brief Description:** Improving veterans' access to services.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morrell, Dammeier, Kelley, Angel, Rolfes, Johnson, Smith, Ross, Conway, Hope, Hunt, Armstrong, Moeller, Herrera, Parker, Rodne, Haler, Short, Chase, Appleton, Green, Nelson, Sullivan, Sells, Dickerson, Newhouse, Kenney, Campbell, Kristiansen, Van De Wege, Orwall, Kessler, Seaquist, Wallace, Simpson, Bailey, Maxwell, McCune, Condotta and Upthegrove; by request of Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/27/09, 2/5/09 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to study ways to increase veterans' access to state and federal assistance programs.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst, Miloscia and Newhouse.

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

**Background:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) was created in 1975 and provides many services to veterans and their families, including medical care, assistance with claims for benefits, estate management, counseling, and financial assistance. The DVA also assists veterans with education, training, and employment.

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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.*

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**Summary of Bill:**

The DVA must study ways to increase its access to veterans and to increase veterans' access to state and federal assistance programs. By December 1, 2009, the DVA must submit a report to the Legislature that addresses the following:

- how to achieve the goal of identifying all veterans in the state within five years;
  - how to efficiently identify veterans as their population grows;
  - how to identify veterans through referrals from other state agencies;
  - how to effectively inform veterans of state and federal programs;
  - the potential costs and savings to the state if the DVA's recommendations were undertaken; and
  - legislation needed to implement the DVA's recommendations.
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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) If we can get money for our veterans from the federal government, we should. Many veterans are eligible for federal benefits but don't always know it. The social services workers need to ask more questions to determine if a client or a member of the client's family is a veteran and, therefore, eligible for federal assistance. The DVA is supportive of the bill. It has already been seen how connecting with veterans through social services will save the state money. The referral system will help identify veterans who may be eligible for federal benefits.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; and Alfie Alvarado, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.