

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1049

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 16, 2009

Title: An act relating to veterans' relief.

Brief Description: Concerning veterans' relief.

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

Brief History: Passed House: 1/26/09, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/16/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott and Pridemore.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The legislative authority of a county with a city, town, or precinct containing qualifying indigent and suffering veterans or family members must provide funds for the relief of these veterans and family members. The legislative authority must consult with and solicit recommendations from the applicable veterans' advisory board to determine the appropriate services needed for local indigent veterans. Veterans' assistance programs must at least partially be funded by the Veterans' Assistance Fund established in the county through a tax levy. The county legislative authority may authorize other entities to administer a veterans' assistance program or programs through grants, contracts, or interlocal agreements.

For purposes of veterans' relief programs, "veteran" has the same meaning in RCW 41.04.005 and 41.04.007. Generally, the definitions include honorably discharged veterans of wars and armed conflicts, as well as honorably discharged veterans of any branch of the service.

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.

Veterans' assistance programs include financial assistance; employment services; both long-term and short-term transitional housing; mental health counseling; trauma services; and the veterans' incarcerated project.

Summary of Bill: The definition of "veteran" for purposes of veterans' relief programs is expanded to include current members of the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves who have been deployed to serve in an armed conflict.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 is an important bill, especially in the coming months when troops will be returning. Urge the Committee's support.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Rolfes, prime sponsor; Dale Movius, Veterans' Legislative Coalition.