

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5806

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection, February 17, 2011

Title: An act relating to a veteran lottery raffle.

Brief Description: Authorizing a statewide raffle to benefit veterans and their families.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Swecker, Kastama, Hobbs, Roach, Kilmer, Shin and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 2/17/11 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

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

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Holmquist Newbry, Ranking Minority Member; King, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Keiser and Kline.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: Lottery. The Washington Lottery was established in 1982. Lottery revenues are used for the following purposes:

- education construction;
- Education Legacy Trust Account;
- stadium bonds;
- problem gambling education;
- economic development; and
- General Fund.

Veterans Innovations Program. In 2006 the Legislature established the Veterans Innovations Program (VIP) within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The purpose of the VIP is to provide crisis and emergency relief and education, training, and employment assistance to veterans and their families. The VIP terminates on June 30, 2016.

Two separate programs were created within the VIP: the Defenders' Fund Program and the Competitive Grant Program. The Defenders' Fund Program allows recent veterans to receive a one-time financial hardship grant of no more than \$500 (\$1,000 in fiscal year 2007-09)

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related to employment, education, housing, and health care. The Competitive Grant Program provides crisis and emergency relief and education, training, and employment assistance.

Summary of Bill: The Lottery Commission is directed, beginning 2011 and each subsequent year, to conduct a statewide raffle to benefit veterans and their families. The veterans raffle tickets will go on sale on Labor Day with a drawing to occur on Veteran's Day, November 11th of each year.

All revenues received from the sale of the games, less amounts paid out in prizes and actual administrative expenses related to the veteran lottery games, must be deposited into the VIP Account for purposes of serving veterans and their families.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 2011.

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: We have a very important program called the VIP that is funded through the General Fund. This fund is critical to assisting those returning from combat zones in terms of transitioning to work life and civilian life. This program is administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs. With all the budget problems we have been having, we have not been able to fund this program adequately. By having a specific raffle, we do not become entangled with Lottery issues. The VIP came about in 2006 as a means to provide an assist to veterans who are coming back from combat. The VIP is not a handout; it becomes part of the larger plan for job training and housing assistance. We have helped over 1800 veterans since the inception of this program. It is a program that not only provides financial help but allows us to track veterans over their lives. The Veteran Legislative Coalition support this bill. We want to generate the money for the VIP.

OTHER: The Lottery fiscal note will show \$330,000 to the Veterans Innovations Program. Because the Lottery already does raffles, this raffle will not be an expansion of gambling.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Conway, prime sponsor; John Lee, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; Dennis Primoli, Veterans Legislation Coalition.

OTHER: Arlen Harris, Washington State Lottery.