

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1782

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

**Title:** An act relating to veterans' homes.

**Brief Description:** Concerning veterans' homes.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Nealey, Appleton, Ryu and Orwall.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/19/13, 2/20/13 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates the Walla Walla Veterans' Home as a branch of the Washington Soldiers' Home.
- Allows admission to the state veterans' homes for parents whose children died while serving in the armed forces.
- Removes the indigency eligibility requirement for admission to the state veterans' homes.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives McCoy, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Johnson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Pike, Ryu, Santos and Sawyer.

**Staff:** Sean Flynn (786-7124).

**Background:**

The state Constitution mandates that the Legislature provide a soldiers' home for honorably discharged resident soldiers, sailors, and marines who were disabled while in the line of duty.

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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.*

In 1890 the Legislature created the Washington Soldiers' Home in Orting. In 1907 the Legislature established a branch of the Washington Soldiers' Home in Retsil, called the Washington Veterans' Home. In 2001 the Legislature established another branch in Spokane, called the Eastern Washington Veterans' Home.

The Washington Soldiers' Home, the Washington Veterans' Home, and the Eastern Washington Veterans' Home (collectively the state veterans' homes) are managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (Department). The Department must provide maintenance to residents, including room and board, medical, dental, domiciliary and nursing care, physical and occupational therapy, and recreational activities.

Certain qualifying veterans are eligible for admission to the state veterans' homes if they are state residents and are indigent and unable to support themselves or their families. Spouses and domestic partners of qualifying veterans also are eligible for admission, as well as spouses and domestic partners of veterans who died if the deceased spouse or partner was a resident or eligible for admission at the time of death, or if the spouse has become indigent since the veteran's death. Spouses or domestic partners of deceased service members also must be at least 50 years old and must have had been married to the service member for three years to be eligible for admission.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Walla Walla Veterans' Home is established as a branch of the Washington Soldiers' Home.

Applicants do not have to be indigent to be eligible for admission in the state veterans' homes. Parents whose children died while serving in the armed forces are eligible for admission to the state veterans' homes. The eligibility requirement is removed that spouses or domestic partners of deceased service members must be at least 50 years old and must have had been married to the service member for three years.

The Department may provide domiciliary and nursing care at the state veterans' homes, but it is not mandated.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill removes the requirement for spouses or domestic partners of service members who have died to be at least 50 years old and to have had been married to their spouse or domestic partner for three years. Other technical corrections are made to avoid redundancy in establishing the eligibility requirements for spouses and domestic partners of deceased service members.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Southwestern Washington is under-served for veteran needs and this is a great location for a home and will be well-utilized.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Nealey, prime sponsor.

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