

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2130

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the veterans innovations program.

Sponsors: Representatives MacEwen, Orwall, Morrell, Seaquist, Haler, Appleton, Ross, Stanford, Green, Van De Wege, Ormsby and Freeman; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs
House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services
Senate Committee on Governmental Operations

Background:

In 2006 the Legislature created the Veterans Innovations Program (VIP) within the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to provide crisis and emergency relief and education, training, and employment assistance to veterans and their families. The DVA may receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public and private sources for the benefit of the VIP. The VIP has its own account from which expenditures may only be used for VIP purposes.

The VIP consists of two separate programs: the Defender's Fund and the Competitive Grant Program. The Defender's Fund provides assistance to veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, or post-9/11 homeland security missions who are experiencing financial hardships due to their time away from home. Veterans eligible under the Defender's Fund may receive a one-time grant of up to \$500.

The Competitive Grant Program funds proposals by veterans through a competitive selection process, based on three categories of need: crisis and emergency relief; education, training, and employment assistance; and community outreach and resources.

The VIP is scheduled to sunset in 2016.

Summary:

The Defender's Fund and the Competitive Grant Program are eliminated within the VIP. Under the VIP, the DVA must provide funding and support to eligible veterans, National Guard members, and members of the Armed Forces reserves for crisis relief and education,

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training, and employment opportunities. The DVA must establish a process to make veterans and National Guard members and reservists aware of the VIP and to assist them in completing the VIP application.

The sunset of the VIP is removed.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 12, 2014