

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1319

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Governmental Operations, March 21, 2013

Title: An act relating to recognizing a welcome home Vietnam veterans day.

Brief Description: Recognizing a welcome home Vietnam veterans day.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, McCoy, Ross, Hunt, Rodne, Orwall, Green, Jinkins, Upthegrove, Chandler, Orcutt, Pedersen, Vick, Roberts, Alexander, Klippert, Holy, Short, Morrell, Smith, Buys, Kochmar, Liias, Moeller, Appleton, Angel, Zeiger, O'Ban, Wilcox, Hurst, Van De Wege, Shea, Fagan, Bergquist, Moscoso, Tarleton, Freeman and Fey.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/20/13, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 3/14/13, 3/21/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Braun, Conway, Fraser and Rivers.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Washington recognizes a variety of dates that are not considered legal holidays, including Korean-American Day on January 13, and Columbus Day on October 12.

The National League of Families' (League) Prisoner of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flag is recognized by Congress and designated as the symbol of our nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still held as prisoners, missing, and unaccounted for in southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the nation. Washington public entities must display the League's POW/MIA flag on the following days:

- Armed Forces Day – the third Saturday in May;
- Memorial Day – the last Monday in May;
- Flag Day – June 14;
- Independence Day – July 4;
- National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day – July 27;
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day – the third Friday in September; and

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' Day – November 11.

If a designated day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, entities must display the League's POW/MIA flag on the preceding Friday.

Summary of Bill: March 30 is recognized as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, but it is not recognized as a legal holiday for any purpose. Public entities must fly the League's POW/MIA flag on that date.

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: More than 1100 Washingtonians gave their lives in Vietnam. Those who returned home were not treated like heroes. When my husband came home from the war, he was spat on at the airport. There is no way to change that mistreatment, but we can give them the recognition and honor they deserve. This is important so future generations can understand the sacrifices Vietnam veterans made and so veterans can seek out the benefits they have earned. Closure is important for all of us Vietnam veterans. Let us put away our guilt, shame, grief, despair, and betrayal. We cannot change the past, but we can help Vietnam veterans by opening the door and saying "Welcome home. We respect you. We honor you. Thanks for serving."

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Linda McNeely, citizen; Heidi Audette, WA Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Gil Calac, Yakima Warriors Assn.