

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1806

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Governmental Operations, March 18, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the definition of veteran for purposes of veterans' assistance programs.

**Brief Description:** Addressing the definition of veteran for purposes of veterans' assistance programs.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Hansen, Magendanz, Appleton, Morrell, Bergquist and Fey).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/04/13, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Governmental Operations: 3/18/13 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** Veterans' Assistance Programs (VAPs). Each county must establish a VAP to provide relief for indigent veterans and their families. Each county must create a veterans' advisory board to determine the needs of local indigent veterans and the available resources and programs that could benefit indigent veterans and their families. Counties must also pay for the burial or cremation costs of indigent veterans or their family members. Counties are authorized to levy a tax to create a Veterans' Assistance Fund to fund the VAP.

Indigent Veteran Definition. For the VAP, veteran includes active service members who have served in an armed conflict and members of the armed forces, reserves, or National Guard who have fulfilled their service obligations and received an honorable or medical discharge. Indigent status for the VAP is determined by each county, based on one or more of the following factors: public assistance received; income level; and the ability to afford basic needs.

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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.*

**Summary of Bill:** A county may decide to extend VAP services to any service member who has received a general discharge under honorable conditions or a medical or physical discharge with an honorable record.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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 will make it easier to aid indigent veterans by loosening some technical restrictions. There are veterans who should be helped but do not fit the exact criteria in statute. The statute is more restrictive than the federal code governing VAP benefits. Some counties grant benefits to these veterans already, so this makes it equitable.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Hansen, prime sponsor; Roth Hafer, Kitsap County Veterans Advisory Board.