

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5691

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Synopsis as Enacted

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

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hewitt, Conway and Rolfes).

**Senate Committee on Governmental Operations**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Article X, section 3 of the Washington State Constitution calls for the Legislature to provide for the maintenance of a soldiers' home for honorably discharged Union soldiers, sailors, marines, and members of the state militia disabled while in the line of duty and who are citizens of the state. Currently, the Department of Veterans' Affairs operates the state's three veterans' homes: the Washington Soldiers' Home and Colony, located in Orting; the Washington Veterans' Home, located in Retsil; and the Spokane Veterans' Home, located in Spokane.

The Soldiers' Home at Orting was opened in 1891 and has a residential capacity of 183. The Colony, designed to serve eligible veterans and their families residing in the Orting School District, was added in 1905 and has a capacity of 24 members. The Washington Veterans' Home, opened in 1910, has a current resident capacity of 262. The Spokane Veterans' Home opened October 1, 2001, and has 100 skilled-level nursing beds. The Orting and Retsil homes provide three levels of care: domiciliary, assisted-living, and skilled nursing.

Indigent veterans and their spouses or domestic partners are eligible to apply for admission to a state veterans' home. All veterans' homes are Medicare and Medicaid-certified facilities.

**Summary:** The Walla Walla Veterans' home is established and maintained as a branch of the state soldiers' home, and any veterans, veterans' spouses, or parents of children who died while serving in the armed forces may apply for admission.

The requirement that a veteran or a veteran's spouse or domestic partner be indigent to apply for admission to a state veterans' home is removed.

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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.*

Parents of any child who died while serving in the armed forces may be admitted as residents to a state veterans' home.

The requirement that state veterans' homes provide both domiciliary and nursing care is removed.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0
House	97	0

**Effective:** June 12, 2014