

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2114

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

Title: An act relating to providing for representation of the state veterans' homes on the governor's veterans affairs advisory committee.

Brief Description: Providing for representation of the state veterans' homes on the governor's veterans affairs advisory committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton, Caldier, Johnson, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self, Hayes and Muri; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/17/15, 2/19/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the membership of the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and designates liaisons from the Committee for each of the state veterans' homes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Sawyer and Van De Wege.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.

The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (Committee) provides advice and makes recommendations to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (Department).

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.

The Committee has 17 members appointed by the Governor to serve four year terms. The committee must consist of:

- one member from the Washington Soldier's Home in Orting and one member from the Veterans' Home in Retsil;
- one member from each of the three congressionally chartered and recognized veterans service organizations with the largest memberships in the state;
- 10 members to represent the congressionally chartered and recognized veterans service organizations that have at least one active chapter in the state; and
- two members who are veterans at large.

The Governor must ensure that appointments represent all geographical parts of the state, as well as minority, and women veteran viewpoints.

State Veterans' Homes.

The State Constitution mandates that the Legislature provide a soldiers' home for honorably discharged resident soldiers, sailors, and marines who were disabled in the line of duty. 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. Finally, in 2014 the Walla Walla Veterans' Home was established.

These state veterans' homes, are managed by the Department. The Department must provide room and board, medical, dental, domiciliary and nursing care, physical and occupational therapy, and recreational activities, to residents of the state veterans' homes.

Summary of Bill:

The two positions on the Committee that represent the state veterans' homes in Orting and Retsil are eliminated. Two more at large positions are added to the Committee.

The Committee must appoint members to serve as liaisons to each of the state veterans' homes. The veterans' homes liaisons must share information about Committee business with the resident council of each veterans' home. The liaisons also must ensure that the issues of the veterans' homes residents are included in regular Committee meetings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In Support) The services provided by the state veterans' homes has changed from servicing retirees to providing end of life care, based on the changing demographics of the residents. The change in this bill would allow the residents to receive information from the Committee and to send information back to the Committee. This will help residents to continue to participate on Committee affairs when as they are less able to travel to the Committee meetings. This idea has been approved by the resident councils of each veterans' home.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Appleton, prime sponsor; Alfie Alvarado, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; and Dick Marcelynas, Governor Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: