

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5035

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the medal of valor.

Brief Description: Authorizing the awarding of the medal of valor to a group of persons.

Sponsors: Senators Pearson, Kohl-Welles, Hatfield and Liias; by request of Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/11/15, 2/12/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 1/30/15, 47-0.

Passed House: 2/19/15, 97-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the Medal of Valor to be awarded to a group of residents of the state.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregory and Hawkins.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

A process for awarding the state Medal of Valor was established in 2000. The medal may be awarded to an individual who has saved, or attempted to save, the life of another at the risk of serious injury or death to himself or herself. The Governor presents the medal during a joint session of both houses.

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.

Any individual may nominate any resident of the state for an act of valor. However, individuals employed by a government entity in any branch of law enforcement, fire fighting, rescue, or other hazardous profession are not eligible for the award. The medal may be awarded posthumously.

The nominations are considered and selected by a committee which meets on an annual basis. The committee consists of the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or their designees. The Secretary of State is a nonvoting ex officio member who serves as the committee's secretary.

Summary of Bill:

In addition to an individual, the Medal of Valor may be awarded to a group of residents of the state for any act of valor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The law indicates that the Medal of Valor may only be awarded to an individual, and not to a group of residents. After the Oso landslide, there were many people who were heroic. People of the various communities searched for victims, cooked for rescue workers, and comforted those suffering. Many people acted valiantly, and the proposed bill would allow the medal to be awarded to a group.

The Office of the Secretary of State supports the bill as an opportunity to recognize those people who came forward to help during the tragedy.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Pearson, prime sponsor; and Toni McKinley-Camp, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.