

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2582

As Passed Senate, February 27, 2018

Title: An act relating to the department of veterans affairs.

Brief Description: Concerning the department of veterans affairs.

Sponsors: Representatives Reeves, Johnson, Kilduff, MacEwen, McBride and Eslick; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/07/18, 98-0.

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/16/18, 2/21/18 [DP-WM].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/27/18, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) director appoint a deputy director and assistant directors, rather than assistants and executive staff, to administer WDVA.
- Changes the title of the managers of state veterans homes to administrator.
- Requires the WDVA provide hiring preference to honorably discharged veterans when hiring administrators for state veterans homes.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Miloscia, Ranking Member; Saldaña and Zeiger.

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The WDVA provides many services and benefits to veterans and their families, including counseling, employment, education, training, burial, housing, medical care, and relief programs. The director of the WDVA conducts, controls, and supervises the

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WDVA. The director also holds the power to appoint and employ personnel for the WDVA, including assistants and executive staff. The director is required to designate a deputy from the executive staff to supervise the WDVA in the director's absence. The director and all appointed assistants and executive staff must be veterans.

The WDVA operates four state veterans homes: the Washington Veterans' Home located in Port Orchard; the Washington Soldiers' Home located in Orting; the Spokane Veterans' Home located in Spokane; and the Walla Walla Veterans' Home located in Walla Walla. Veterans with an honorable discharge who reside in the state, and their spouses or domestic partners, are eligible to apply for admission to a state veterans home. The director must appoint a superintendent to manage each state veterans home. Each superintendent must be licensed by the Department of Health as a nursing home administrator.

Summary of Bill: The WDVA director will appoint a deputy director and assistant directors, rather than assistants and executive staff, to administer WDVA.

The title of the individual appointed to manage each state veterans home is administrator, rather than superintendent. When hiring an administrator for a state veterans' home, honorably discharged veterans are given a preference.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill helps provide the best service for veteran's homes and will provide important tools to put the right people in the right positions. Veterans need our help and there is a strong need to pass this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kristine Reeves, Prime Sponsor; Jerry Fugich, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Heidi Audette, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.