

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2720

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to the Washington soldiers' home.

Brief Description: Concerning the Washington soldiers' home.

Sponsors: Representatives Armstrong, Morrell, McCune, Miloscia, Finn, Appleton, Hunt, Alexander, O'Brien, Kelley, Conway and Campbell; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/22/10 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Veterans' Affairs to work with public or private entities on projects to make the best use of the soldiers' home property and facilities and to extend long term leases up to 75 years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst, Miloscia and Taylor.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

State Veterans' Homes.

Article 10, section 3 of the 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. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) operates the state's three veterans homes:

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the Spokane Veterans' Home, located in Spokane; the Washington Veterans' Home located in Retsil; and the Washington Soldiers' Home located in Orting. Indigent veterans and their spouses or domestic partners are eligible to apply for admission to a state veterans' home. The veterans' homes provide both domiciliary and nursing care.

The Washington Soldiers' Home was established in 1891 with the erection of Washington Barracks. Garfield Barracks was built in 1917. Currently, there are about a dozen buildings on the 181-acre campus.

The Department of General Administration's Statutory Authority for Leasing Facilities.

The Department of General Administration (GA) has the statutory authority to acquire, lease, purchase, and dispose of real estate on behalf of those state agencies that do not have specific statutory authority. The GA may fix the terms and conditions of leases, except that no lease may extend more than 20 years in duration.

Summary of Bill:

The DVA is authorized to work with public or private entities on projects to make the best use of the soldiers' home property and facilities. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the renovation and long-term lease of the Garfield Barracks building. All long-term leases of the soldiers' home property are subject to the requirements of the GA's statutory authority for leasing facilities, except that long-term leases may run for up to 75 years.

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 DVA supports the bill. The bill gives the DVA a chance to do a public/private partnership and helps them be more successful than they already are in the state of Washington.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Armstrong, prime sponsor; John Lee, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; and Amanda Livesay.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.