

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4025

As Passed House:
February 12, 2010

Brief Description: Honoring Vietnam veterans.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Campbell, Seaquist, Appleton, McCune, Kelley, Warnick, Armstrong, Sells, Morrell, Maxwell, Van De Wege, Simpson, Conway, Smith, Shea, Pearson, Johnson, Hurst and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/29/10 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/10, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Urges the executive branch and the legislative authorities of each county to promote a statewide effort to honor and support the Republic of South Vietnam veterans and American veterans of the Vietnam War.

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:

Thousands of Washington residents served in the Vietnam War and more than 1,100 did not return home. South Vietnamese soldiers fought alongside American soldiers during the war and, as a result, died or spent years imprisoned or persecuted in Vietnam after the war. Sixty thousand Vietnamese-Americans now live in the state and the majority of these are soldiers of the Republic of South Vietnam and their families who fled or immigrated from Vietnam after the war, many under the Orderly Departure Program.

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 Vietnam Veterans Committee of Washington has been formed to recognize the contributions of the Republic of South Vietnam soldiers who fought alongside American soldiers and has proposed that a series of three flag poles be placed at the Washington Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Capitol Campus.

Summary of Bill:

The executive branch of Washington and the legislative authorities of each county are urged to promote a statewide effort to encourage Vietnam veterans to work with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Vietnam Veterans Committee of Washington to plan appropriate opportunities for joint ceremonies and events bringing these two groups of veterans together and fostering a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, and to propose other means of jointly honoring and supporting the Republic of South Vietnam and American veterans of the Vietnam War.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) American soldiers worked alongside South Vietnamese soldiers during the Vietnam War. This is a wonderful opportunity to support veterans who served in Vietnam and is long overdue. The United States today is more accepting and supportive of our veterans. The United States, Washington, and Prisoner of War flags would be displayed at the Vietnam Memorial on the Capital Campus. The Vietnamese community supports the bill. Many Vietnamese came to the United States after the war in 1975. There were no honors for the South Vietnamese soldiers, only prison, suffering, and loss. Many Vietnamese have started new lives in Washington, but still honor family members who fought and died for freedom and democracy and against communist rule of Vietnam. Many visit the Vietnam War Memorial on the Capital Campus to remember and honor our veterans and the Americans who fought and died for the cause. While the memorial was built for American veterans, the smallest mention of South Vietnam veterans at the memorial would mean so much. On behalf of Vietnam veterans, and those whose names appear on the memorial, it is asked that you support the bill. Vietnam veterans are committed to working with the Department of Veterans' Affairs on the design and installation of the flag poles.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative O'Brien, prime sponsor; First Gentleman Mike Gregoire; Heidi Audette, Washington State Department of Veterans Administration; Lan Phan Jones; Dale Parsons; and Bill Fuller.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.