

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1707

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,  
APRIL 4, 1991

**Brief Description:** Changing the Washington state guard to the Washington state defense force.

**SPONSORS:** Representatives Anderson, Sheldon, McLean, R. King, Jacobsen, Broback and Wineberry; by request of Military Department.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Barbara Howard (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** April 4, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Both a state and national guard are created under Title 38 RCW. The State Guard consists of an unpaid, volunteer group available to the Governor when the National Guard is called to active federal service. The most recent assignments for the State Guard have been in disaster or emergency response activities and training.

The public commonly perceives the state and national guards as synonymous. In 1955, Congress renamed the states' "military forces" as "defense forces." The Adjutant General has concluded that the semantic confusion can be eliminated by renaming the Washington State Guard the "Washington State Defense Force." This will also make the terms more consistent with federal language and usage in other states.

**SUMMARY:**

Throughout Title 38 RCW, the "state guard" is renamed the "state defense force."

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This is purely a state entity, authorized under the U.S. Constitution and the federal State Defense Forces Act. It maintains a cadre of officers and enlisted personnel available to the Governor if the National Guard is fully mobilized. It has assisted in state disaster response. Twenty-three states already have a purely state militia element.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Brig. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, Assistant Adjutant General for Air (pro)