

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2670

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As of February 23, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to veterans' relief.

**Brief Description:** Studying matters affecting the administration of the veterans' assistance fund.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Moeller, Sullivan, Morrell, Hinkle, Chase, McCoy, Cox, Clibborn, Condotta, Lovick, G. Simpson, Linville and Rockefeller).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/24/04.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** Indigent and suffering veterans receive assistance for themselves, their families and families of deceased veterans from a property tax levy of one and one-eighth cents to 27 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. This relief is distributed through local veterans' organizations. The veterans' organizations disbursements are funded by the county tax levies, and the proceeds of those levies are drawn upon by the veterans organization's commander or designee.

The county retains some duties. Burial services to honorably discharged veterans and their families are subsidized by the county. The county may order the head of the organizations distributing relief to post a performance bond. The organization must file annual statements of the amount of relief funds distributed and to whom those funds were given. Finally, the county may not send indigent veterans or their families to almshouses or orphanages without the consent of the organizations providing services.

The county must pay rent for the meeting place of veterans organizations if the rent is reasonable and the state or municipality is not already furnishing a meeting place.

**Summary of Bill:** The Joint Committee for Veterans' and Military Affairs is instructed to conduct an interim study of indigent veterans' relief. The study is to focus on current services provided by the county and the necessity of amending 73.08 RCW, the current Veterans' Relief Act.

The interim committee must report its findings to the Legislature prior to the 2005 session. The committee must also provide suggested legislation to the Legislature. The interim study expires in July of 2005.

The counties are given authority to continue current veterans' relief practices without disruption. The counties may provide aid beyond financial assistance and may assign

nonprofit organizations to provide indigent veterans' services. The counties may provide services relating to advertising the availability of aid from the veterans' fund.

The counties are also authorized to reimburse themselves for reasonable administrative costs out of collected money from the tax levies supporting the veterans' fund.

The counties are also encouraged to raise the amount of aid provided to account for inflationary increases where appropriate.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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