

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SJM 8040

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As Passed Senate, February 12, 2004

**Brief Description:** Requesting funding for veterans' health care needs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Shin, Jacobsen, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Berkey, Fraser, Doumit, Prentice, Horn, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Fairley, Oke, Stevens, Hale, Zarelli, T. Sheldon, B. Sheldon, Schmidt, McAuliffe, Keiser, Murray, Spanel, Brown, Eide, Rasmussen, Winsley and Benton.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 1/27/04, 1/30/04 [DP].  
Passed Senate: 2/12/04, 49-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Berkey, Fairley, Kastama and McCaslin.

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

**Background:** The veteran population in Washington numbers about 670,000. The number of veterans receiving health care through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs ranks second to last among the states. The network for veterans' service provision that includes Washington has the largest number of veterans waiting for non-emergent clinic visits. Increasingly numbers of Washington State veterans who had previously had other arrangements for their health care must for the first time now turn to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for their primary health care. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) has not fully considered the current and future need for veterans' health care.

**Summary of Bill:** The Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington petition President Bush, the Congress of the United States, and the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to serve adequately the current and future demands of our state's veterans and to affirm the debt owed these veterans.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Testimony For:** The federal Veterans' Health Care monies are not going to our state in the amounts we need and deserve, especially in comparison with what other states receive.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Shin, prime sponsor.