

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1049

As Passed House:

January 26, 2009

Title: An act relating to veterans' relief.

Brief Description: Concerning veterans' relief.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Angel, Kelley, Smith, Conway, Hope, Hunt, Dammeier, Dunshee, Herrera, Seaquist, Armstrong, Moeller, Parker, Van De Wege, Johnson, Simpson, Rodne, Orwall, Haler, Lias, Short, Kirby, Green, Kenney, Goodman, Williams, Dickerson, McCoy, Appleton, Chase, Morrell, Sullivan, Sells, Newhouse, Upthegrove, Kessler, Roach, Wallace, Bailey, Maxwell, McCune, Kretz, Condotta and Campbell; by request of Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/13/09, 1/16/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 1/26/09, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Expands the definition of "veteran" for purposes of veterans' relief programs to include current members of the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves who have been deployed to serve in an armed conflict.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Miloscia and Newhouse.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135)

Background:

The legislative authority of a county with a city, town, or precinct containing qualifying indigent and suffering veterans or family members must provide funds for the relief of these

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veterans and family members. The legislative authority must consult with and solicit recommendations from the applicable Veterans' Advisory Board to determine the appropriate services needed for local indigent veterans. Veterans' assistance programs must at least partially be funded by the Veterans' Assistance Fund established in the county through a tax levy. For purposes of veterans' relief programs, "veteran" has the same meaning as in RCW 41.04.005 and 41.04.007. Generally, the definitions include honorably discharged veterans of wars and armed conflicts, as well as honorably discharged veterans of any branch of the service.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The definition of "veteran" for purposes of veterans' relief programs is expanded to include current members of the National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves who have been deployed to serve in an armed conflict.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 addition to this law allows National Guard and reserve soldiers to receive assistance from county relief funds. We rely on our National Guard and Reserves for the current wars and it is fair that they receive these benefits. Many of these soldiers live in rural communities and earn less than poverty wages. These soldiers need assistance. No county has exhausted the available relief funds. This bill will help.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Rolfes, prime sponsor; Skip Dreps, Veterans of Modern Warfare; and Mike Partridge, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.