
**Community Development, Housing &
Tribal Affairs Committee**

SB 5958

Brief Description: Providing for representation of the state veterans' homes on the governor's veterans affairs advisory committee.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Liias, Benton, McCoy, Angel and Chase; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the membership of the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and designates liaisons from the Committee for each of the state veterans' homes.

Hearing Date: 3/16/15

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.

The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (Committee) provides advice and makes recommendations to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (Department).

The Committee has 17 members appointed by the Governor to serve four year terms. The committee must consist of:

- one member from the Washington Soldier's Home in Orting and one member from the Veterans' Home in Retsil;
- one member from each of the three congressionally chartered and recognized veterans service organizations with the largest memberships in the state;
- ten members to represent the congressionally chartered and recognized veterans service organizations that have at least one active chapter in the state; and

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- two members who are veterans at large.

The Governor must ensure that appointments represent all geographical parts of the state, as well as minority, and women veteran viewpoints.

State Veterans' Homes.

The State Constitution mandates that the Legislature provide a soldiers' home for honorably discharged resident soldiers, sailors, and marines who were disabled in the line of duty. In 1890 the Legislature created the Washington Soldiers' Home in Orting. In 1907 the Legislature established a branch of the Washington Soldiers' Home in Retsil, called the Washington Veterans' Home. In 2001 the Legislature established another branch in Spokane, called the Eastern Washington Veterans' Home. Finally, in 2014 the Walla Walla Veterans' Home was established.

These state veterans' homes, are managed by the Department. The Department must provide room and board, medical, dental, domiciliary and nursing care, physical and occupational therapy, and recreational activities, to residents of the state veterans' homes.

Summary of Bill:

The two positions on the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee that represent the state veterans' homes in Orting and Retsil are eliminated. Two more at large positions are added to the committee.

The Committee must appoint members to serve as liaisons to each of the state veterans' homes. The veterans' homes liaisons must share information about committee business with the resident council of each veterans' home. The liaisons also must ensure that the issues of the veterans' homes residents are included in regular Committee meetings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.