

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5958

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring the governor's veterans affairs advisory committee to appoint liaisons to the state veterans' homes if the home does not have a representative on the committee.

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

Senate Committee on Government Operations & Security
House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Background: The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). The VAAC provides advice and makes recommendations to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). The Committee has 17 members appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. The VAAC consists of the following:

- 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
- two members who are veterans at large.

The Governor must ensure that appointments represent all regions of the state and minority and women's 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. DVA manages the veterans' homes and must provide room and board, medical, dental, domiciliary and nursing care, physical and occupational therapy, and recreational activities to residents. There are four veterans' homes in the state:

- the Washington Soldiers' Home in Orting, established in 1980;
- the Washington Veterans' Home in Retsil, established in 1907;
- the Eastern Washington Veterans' Home in Spokane, established in 2001; and
- the Walla Walla Veterans' Home, established in 2014.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary: If the resident council for the Orting or Retsil veterans' home does not nominate a resident to represent the home on the VAAC, the Governor may appoint a member-at-large in place of that home's representative. The VAAC must appoint a liaison to any state veterans' home with no representative appointed to the committee. The veterans' homes liaisons must share information about VAAC business with the resident council of the veterans' home and ensure that issues raised by the veterans' homes residents are included in regular VAAC meetings.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 24, 2015