

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1250

As Passed House:

March 9, 2021

Title: An act relating to designating Washington a purple heart state.

Brief Description: Designating Washington a purple heart state.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Orcutt, Ryu, Boehnke, Dufault and Riccelli).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/27/21, 1/28/21 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/21, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Designates Washington as a Purple Heart State that honors people who have received the Purple Heart award.
- Authorizes various agencies to erect signs recognizing that Washington is a Purple Heart State and to accept gifts or donations to assist efforts related to Washington being a Purple Heart State.
- Creates three accounts in the custody of the State Treasurer where the gifts and donations received by the specified agencies must be deposited.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Valdez, Chair; Lekanoff, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dolan, Graham and Gregerson.

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

Staff: Erik Olson (786-7296) and Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

The Purple Heart Award.

The Purple Heart award is a medal presented to members of the Armed Forces who have been wounded or killed as the result of enemy action while serving in the United States military.

Washington celebrates August 7 as Purple Heart Recipient Recognition Day and offers a distinctive license plate for Purple Heart recipients. Moreover, Washington has multiple counties, cities, and locations that recognize portions of the transportation system as part of the Purple Heart Trail. The Purple Heart Trail, designated by signs placed along the trail, is a system of roads, highways, bridges, and other monuments that honors the men and women who have received the Purple Heart award.

Motorist Informational Signs.

The Department of Transportation is authorized to erect and maintain motorist information sign panels within the right-of-way of the interstate highway system to give the traveling public specific information as to gas, food, lodging, camping, or tourist-oriented businesses available on a crossroad at or near an interchange.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Washington is designated a Purple Heart State that honors people who have received the Purple Heart award.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and any state military and military affairs agencies are authorized to:

- erect signs recognizing that Washington is a Purple Heart State; and
- accept gifts or donations to assist efforts related to Washington being a Purple Heart State.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is authorized to:

- erect signs as part of the transportation system recognizing that Washington is a Purple Heart State, especially at entry points to the state; and
- accept gifts or donations to assist efforts related to Washington being a Purple Heart State.

The Military Department Purple Heart State Account, the DVA Purple Heart State Account, and the DOT Purple Heart State Account are each created as nonappropriated accounts in the custody of the State Treasurer. Gifts and donations received by the specified agencies for the purpose of this act must be deposited into their respective account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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) Numerous individuals from Washington have been injured in combat and received the Purple Heart medal. The Purple Heart medal signifies the sacrifices that have been made by military members for our freedoms, especially those who have been injured in combat. Lewis and Thurston counties are the two Purple Heart counties in Washington. Becoming a Purple Heart State would be a permanent, visible, and year-round demonstration of appreciation to the men and women who served and sacrificed for the United States. The DVA will work with the DOT to identify costs and work with various groups who would be interested in purchasing and installing the Purple Heart State signs on all roads that lead into Washington.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Orcutt, prime sponsor; Mary Astrid; Alfie Alvarado, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; and Edna Fund.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.