

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1250

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As of March 17, 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:** Passed House: 3/9/21, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 3/17/21.

### Brief Summary of 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 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.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

**Background:** 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 7th as Purple Heart Recipient Recognition Day and offers a distinctive license plate for Purple Heart recipients. Interstate 5 from the Canadian border

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to the Oregon State line is named 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 those who have received the Purple Heart award. Washington also has multiple counties and cities that have Purple Heart designations.

**Summary of 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 state military agencies are authorized to erect signs recognizing Washington is a Purple Heart State. The Department of Transportation (DOT) is authorized to erect signs as part of the transportation system recognizing Washington is a Purple Heart State, especially at entry points to the state.

The DVA Purple Heart State Account, the Military Department Purple Heart State Account, and the DOT Purple Heart State Account are each created as nonappropriated accounts in the custody of the state treasurer. The DVA, state military agencies, and DOT are authorized to accept gifts or donations to assist efforts related to Washington being a Purple Heart State which must be deposited into their respective accounts. The director or secretary of each agency, or their designee, may authorize expenditures from the account to erect signs.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill came from a Lewis County constituent who pointed out that we have Purple Heart counties in our state but we not a Purple Heart State. Lewis County formed Purple Heart committee in 2019 and was the second county to be recognized as a Purple Heart county. We have portions of our state highways named after military personnel. There is a sign designating I-5 as the Purple Heart Trail. Being a Purple Heart State helps further recognize the sacrifices that they make. It is important to remember that freedom is not free, there are costs to that and the Purple Heart represents the cost that they pay to liberate our freedom. With as many military bases and veterans in our state we should be honoring and thanking them. This bill allows for agencies to receive funding and put up signs to get this done. The signs erected under the bill would serve as a reminder to people on a daily basis of our military personnel and the fact that we have the freedoms we do because of them. Veterans Day is only once a year but being a Purple Heart State would be a permanent, visible, year round thank you to the men and women that recognizes their courage and commitment in protecting our freedom. This bill makes Washington not a blue or red state, but a Purple Heart State.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Ed Orcutt, Prime Sponsor; Mary Astrid; Alfie Alvarado, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.