

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1031

As Passed House:
January 26, 2023

Title: An act relating to the medal of valor award presentation.

Brief Description: Modifying medal of valor award presentation requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Low, Ryu, Schmidt, Christian, Reeves and Ramos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/11/23, 1/18/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/26/23, 93-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the presentation of the Medal of Valor when the Legislature is not in a joint session, removing the previous prohibition.
- Removes the limitation on the Governor's authority to delegate presentation of the Medal of Valor only at a time of disability or illness, and expands the Governor's authority to delegate presentation of the award to any time the Governor is unable to present the award.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Abbarno, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

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.

Background:

The state Medal of Valor is awarded to any person or group of individuals who has or have saved, or attempted to save, the life of another at the risk of serious injury or death to themselves. Recipients of the award are selected by the Governor's State Medal of Valor Committee (Committee), which consists of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or their designees. The Secretary of State is a nonvoting ex officio member. The Committee meets annually to consider candidates for the award, and any individual may nominate a resident or group of residents of the state for the award. However, the award may not be given to any individual who acted during the course of their duties while serving in the following professions and employed by a government entity within the state: law enforcement, firefighting, rescue, or other hazardous profession. There have been 12 recipients of the award.

The award is presented to recipients by the Governor, who may present the award only during a joint session of both houses of the Legislature. The Governor may delegate presentation of the award to other members of the Committee, except the Secretary of State, if the Governor is unable to present the award due to disability or illness.

Summary of Bill:

The time when the Medal of Valor may be presented to recipients is expanded to include when both houses of the Legislature are not in a joint session. The limitation of the Governor's authority to delegate presentation of the award only during disability or illness is removed, thereby expanding the Governor's authority to delegate the award to be at any time the Governor is unable to present it.

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) There are many people in our society who put their life at great risk to save others and they deserve to be recognized appropriately. The Medal of Valor has not been awarded in a long time because it requires the Governor to present the award during a joint legislative session. Removing the barriers to when the award can be presented and who can present the award will give more flexibility to the process and help to make sure people are recognized for their heroic efforts.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Sam Low, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.