FINAL BILL REPORT
2ESHB 1541

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the veterans affairs advisory committee.

Sponsors: House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Abell, Donaghy, Morgan, Kloba, Shavers, Zahn, Hill and Simmons; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs).

House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans
Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections

Background:

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

- one member from the Washington Soldiers' Home and Colony in Orting;
- one member from the Washington Veterans' Home at Retsil;
- three members, one from each of the three congressionally chartered and recognized veterans service organizations with the largest membership in the state;
- 10 members representing 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 VAAC appointments represent all geographical parts of the state, as well as minority and women veteran viewpoints. The VAAC must appoint members to serve as liaisons to the state veterans' homes, unless the home has a representative appointed to the VAAC.

State Veterans' Homes.
The State Constitution mandates that the Legislature provide a soldiers' home for honorably

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discharged resident soldiers, sailors, and marines who were disabled in the line of duty. These state veterans' homes are managed by the WDVA. In 1890 the Legislature created the Washington Soldiers' Home in Orting. In 1907 the Legislature established a branch of the Washington Soldiers' Home at Retsil, called the Washington Veterans' Home. In 2001 the Legislature established another branch in Spokane, called the Eastern Washington Veterans' Home. In 2014 the Walla Walla Veterans' Home was established.

Summary:

The VAAC membership is modified as follows:

- The Governor may appoint two representatives from the four veterans' homes, or an at-large member if there are no nominations from the homes.
- The Governor is required to appoint six, rather than 10, members from nationally recognized veterans service organizations with an active chapter in the state.
- The Governor is required to appoint six, rather than two, at-large members.
- The member appointments must reflect military experience and personal attributes, in addition to geographic diversity, minority viewpoints, and women veterans.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0
House	91	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 11, 2026