

MINUTES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lee Tafanelli at 4:00 P.M. on March 9, 2006 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Kasha Kelley- excused
Representative Mike Peterson- excused

Committee staff present:

Amy Deckard, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Mike Corrigan, Revisor of Statutes Office
Gina Bowes, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mike Hayden, Secretary, Department of Wildlife & Parks
Representative Richard Carlson
Representative Anthony Brown
Jeff Lawson, Past State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Jim Bunker, Veteran Information Network
Chuck Yunker, Adjutant, American Legion
George Webb, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs

Others attending:

See attached list.

- Attachment 1 Overview of **HB 2894**
- Attachment 2 Testimony by Mike Hayden, Secretary, Department of Wildlife & Parks
- Attachment 3 Testimony by Representative Richard Carlson
- Attachment 4 Testimony by Representative Anthony Brown
- Attachment 5 Testimony by Jeff Lawson, Past State Commander for Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Attachment 6 Testimony by Jim Bunker, Veteran Information Network
- Attachment 7 Testimony by Charles Yunker, Adjutant, American Legion
- Attachment 8 Testimony by George Webb, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs

Hearing on HB 2894 - Concerning hunting and fishing licenses for veterans.

Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research, explained sections of **HB 2894** (Attachment 1) which exempts veterans who reside in Kansas from being required to purchase hunting and fishing licenses. Staff further explained that free admission to state parks to Kansas veterans was not a provision included in this bill.

Mike Hayden, Secretary of Department of Wildlife & Parks, presented testimony in opposition of **HB 2894** (Attachment 2). Secretary Hayden stated the bill provides no replacement funding for free hunting and fishing licensing privileges for Kansas veterans; nevertheless he expressed his willingness to work with the Committee and the Legislature to recognize our veterans if it could be accomplished on a fiscally sound basis. Secretary Hayden also addressed the need for a clear and finite definition for "veteran" in this bill. He also noted the provisions of the bill would be effective July 1, 2006 for licensure and the Department of Wildlife & Parks begins its licensing on the calendar year; therefore he suggested changing the effective date to January 1, 2006. Secretary Hayden stood for questions.

Representative Richard Carlson presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 3). Representative Carlson stood for questions.

Representative Anthony Brown presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 4). Representative Brown expressed veterans utilizing on this provision of the law be required to provide some sort of official

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documentation such as the DD-214 record of discharge to prove their status. He also stated without a provision to reimburse the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks for licenses provided to veterans, the Department would not be able to receive the full amount of federal aid apportionment to which the state is entitled. Rep. Brown stood for questions.

Jeff Lawson, Past State Commander, Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars, presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 5). Mr. Lawson suggested consideration be given to those veterans who are rated 100% disabled permanent and total by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which would significantly lessen the fiscal impact on the state. Mr. Lawson stood for questions. Mr. Lawson responded to a question related to a definition of "veteran". Chair Tafanelli stated that a legal definition for "veteran" was necessary because of the potential fiscal impact to the state.

Jim Bunker, Veteran Information Network, presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 6). Mr. Bunker stood for questions.

Charles Yunker, Adjutant, American Legion, presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 7). Mr. Yunker stood for questions.

George Webb, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, presented testimony in support of **HB 2894** (Attachment 8). Mr. Webb stated that currently free hunting and fishing licenses apply to members of the Kansas National Guard, but not to all veterans. He also noted that Kansas agencies do not confer veteran status to military personnel who remain on active duty and that the Committee may wish to consider that factor. Mr. Webb stood for questions.

Chair Tafanelli closed the hearing on **HB 2894**.

Chair Tafanelli went on to the next order of business, **HB 2746**.

Representative Burgess moved to make three amendments to the **HB 2746**, first to change the effective date to January 1, 2007 instead of July 1, 2006 (Page 3, Line 17); second to add a \$40 first time user fee to help pay for the cost of manufacturing the plate; and third to add "comma Inc." after the words Kansas Support Our Troops to the following: Page 1, line 23, line 27, line 30 and line 31; Page 2, line 12, line 16 and line 19 as well as anywhere else this may apply. The motion was seconded by Representative Ruiz.

Representative Burgess moved to recommend **HB 2746** favorable for passage as amended. The motion was seconded by Representative Ruiz. Motion carried.

Representative Ruff moved to approve the minutes, as written, of February 1 and February 13. The motion was seconded by Representative Grange. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting will be "on call of the Chair".