

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY AND HOMELAND
SECURITY

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Myers at 1:30 P.M. on February 12, 2007 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office
Athena Andaya, Kansas Legislative Research
Betty Caruthers, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Charles Yunker, American Legion
Darrell Bencken, VFW
Bob Ulin, Association of US Army
Jim Bunker
Christian Kramer
Jim Frederick
Randy Mettner, Adjutant General's Office
Robin Kempf, Board of Regents

Others attending:

See attached list.

Moved by Representative Kelsey, seconded by Representative Colloton for approval of Minutes of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security held on February 7, 2007 be approved.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers opened hearings on **HB 2210 - KS veterans affairs; service grant programs.**

Chairman Myers requested Revisor, Art Griggs to give a summary of the bill. He covered the changes and new requirements of the bill. Representative Ruff questioned the intent of the bill which now states that all claims now filed with the federal department of veterans affairs by the Kansas commission on veterans' affairs shall be.....etc. Representative Ruff stated this was not her intention with the bill and she would make certain to have that changed.

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Ruff who gave testimony as a proponent for the bill. (Attachment 1) She noted a loyalty to the VFW and American Legion over the years with the State, noting it was only natural they would inherit the initial phase of the claims program. Representative Ruff also stated it was never the intention to eliminate other VSO's from participation.

Chairman Myers recognized the following proponents who gave testimony on the bill:

Charles Yunker (Attachment 2)

Darrell Bencken (Attachment 3) He requests giving the present Grant Program a three year period to prove that it is working.

Chairman Myers recognized the following opponents who gave testimony on the bill:

Bob Ulin (Attachment 4) He wants a choice of providers and stated that this bill "smacks of favoritism."

Jim Bunker (Attachment 5) He believes any attempt to force veterans to use only one or two VSO's for their claims goes against everything the program was initially set up for.

Christian Kramer (Attachment 6) He believes this bill will limit veterans' access to service and that they should continue to have the freedom of choice.

Chairman Myers recognized Jim Frederick who presented testimony on behalf of George Webb (Attachment 7) and Michael Neer (Attachment 8), both opponents to the bill.

Chairman Myers closed hearings on **HB 2210.**

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security at 1:30 P.M. on February 12, 2007 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

Chairman Myers opened hearings on **HB 2425 - Tuition and fees for members of Kansas army or national guard.**

Chairman Myers recognized Randy Mettner who gave testimony as a proponent for the bill. (Attachment 9) He believes this bill gives clarification to members of the Kansas National Guard regarding tuition fees for state institutions.

Chairman Myers recognized Robin Kempf who gave neutral testimony regarding the bill. (Attachment 10) She asked that the Committee refer to **HB 2352** which has the same intent as **HB 2425** but addresses the requirement of “active” service regarding National Guard members.

Chairman Myers closed the hearings regarding **HB 2425.**

Chairman Myers adjourned the meeting at 3:10.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13, 2007.