

COMMITTEE MINUTES for VETERANS AFFAIRS

Date: January 16, 2008

Place: Room 24

Convened: 1/16/2008
4:00 PM

Recessed:

Reconvened:

Adjourned: 1/16/2008
4:45 PM

Present: Senators Beall-CH, Warnstadt-VC, Seymour-RM, Danielson, Hartsuch, Horn, Kibbie, McKinley, Ragan

Absent: None

Excused: Senators Black, McKibben

Next meeting at 11:30 am (not 4:00)

Comments: veterans issues are nonpartisan

Presentation:

Bob Holliday (board chair of IA Gold Star Military Museum) and Col Russ Bierl (Museum Director)

Thanks to Legislature for supporting this museum

Located at National Guard HQ, Camp Dodge to honor ALL Iowans who have served in the military, regardless of age, rank, division

Displayed plans for expansion of project

Attendance has increased beyond expectations, with visitors from all over the country

Important to educate young people

Facility is free of charge, do some travelling education, connected to ICN Museum's utilities paid by federal government because it is classified as a training facility

2 fulltime state employees (Col. Bierl and curator)

Equipment, exhibits, archives, etc. ? Museum has access to national Center of Military History

Additional thanks for the Gold Star Families license plates

Sen. Seymour opening comments: Our work is important and bipartisan, and our veterans deserve it.

Sen. Warnstadt: Glad to be here.

Assignment of subcommittees:

SSB 3032: Sen. Horn (Chair), Sen. Beall, Sen. Hartsuch

SSB 3033: Sen. Warnstadt (Chair), Sen. Kibbie, Sen. McKinley

SSB 3034: Sen. Danielson (Chair), Sen. Ragan, Sen. McKibben

SSB 3035: Sen. Black (Chair), Sen. Horn, Sen. McKibben

2007 SF 471: Sen. Danielson wishes for no further consideration.

Send to LSA for drafting:

Trust Fund Statute Proposed Changes (proposed by Pat Palmersheim and Steve Mulcahy)

Minor change to Gold Star Families license plate ? change definition of Gold Star Family

Sen. Seymour voices support

IA Veterans Council Legislative Resolutions ? each will be pursued further, including

A. Veterans? home ? full funding

B. Every county have an office of Veterans Affairs

C. Matching funds for Vets service orgs

D. Continue funding Vets Trust Fund, and prevent non-Vets from access to it
Const amendment to give at least 5 mil/yr, til it has 50 mil in 2015

E. Property tax exemptions

F. Viet Nam bonus (1973-1975) (500k/yr)
G. Exempt vets from state income tax while on active federal duty
H. Exempt disability/retirement pay from income tax
I. Limit change to property taxes for veterans
M. Continue injured veteran grant
N. Fully fund Dept of Veterans Affairs & State Vets Cemetery
Q. Continue Home Ownership Assistance Grant
X. State funding for disabled vets? children?s post-secondary education
Y. Disabled Veteran Business Set Aside Program
Z. Limit cost of state-funded education for veterans
Also: ensure nondiscrimination in child custody, work to transfer military skills to state-licensed jobs, approve Veterans Home construction project, make job vacancy information available to returning service members.

Sen. Kibbie asks that we have someone brief/update the committee on the status of Viet Nam bonus claims, etc.

Distributed summary of Gov. Culver?s proposed budget for Department of Veterans Affairs

Commandant Steen comments:

Need state funding to get matching federal money. Entire project (through 2020) will cost \$100 million (possible to save \$18 mil if done sooner).

Commandant Steen would like to deliver formal presentation to committee. He also shared a letter from a veteran appealing for more resources to honor the service of veterans.

Introductions of guests to committee

Sen. Danielson requests a clear delineation between budget areas, such as capital and operational expenses. Chairman suggests inviting guests back, as well as governor?s staff, to clarify

Sen. Warnstadt moves to adjourn

Senator Daryl Beall

Chelsea Lepley, Committee Secretary