



Washington State Legislature

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Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs

Executive Committee:
Representative Barbara Bailey
Senator Steve Conway
Representative Tina Orwall
Senator Pam Roach

Meeting Minutes

June 29, 2012 meeting, Oak Harbor Library

Members present: Bailey, Orwall, and Rolfes

Members absent: Conway, Roach, Finn, Becker, Carrell, Hudgins, Shin, Swecker, Hope, Klippert, McCune, Sullivan.

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 PM by co-chair Bailey.

Beth Munns, Oak Harbor City Council, briefed the committee on various collaborations between Whidbey Island Naval Air Station and the City of Oak Harbor, such as the Sky Warrior program, the 4th of July parade, the military appreciation picnic, the sea cadet program, as well as collaborations between the city and base police on drug enforcement and domestic violence issues. Admiral Lyle Bull, from the Save NAS Whidbey Task Force, discussed the importance of meeting with staff from the Department of Defense in order to reinforce the usefulness of the base and the base's ability to expand its size. Additionally, Bruce VanTassell, also from the Save NAS Whidbey Task Force, discussed the encroachment issues facing the base and noise concerns that have been raised.

Dr. Rick Schulte, Superintendent, Oak Harbor School District, presented an update on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The compact addresses policies, such as enrollment, placement and attendance, eligibility, and graduation that affect transitioning military students.

Gerald Pfannenstiel, Coordinator, and Angie Homola, of Island County Veterans Services, briefed the committee on Island County's veterans' assistance program. The program provides veterans with food and fuel vouchers, makes referrals to social services, provides monetary assistance for rent and utilities, and school clothing and supplies. The various programs are not intended to provide full support. The Island County program also provides transportation for veterans to and from medical and other appointments for services. It also offers early childhood education for certain children with needs. Money set aside through the property tax for veterans is approximately \$165,000 per year, and the program currently provides services for 80 to 100 veterans. Case management has been the key to the program's success, but more money is needed.

Remarks from the general public:

- Paulette Becker, a registered nurse, addressed the committee about the effects of multiple deployments. She talked about the need for either a limited number of deployments or reinstating the draft.
- Stan Stanley stated the need for a full time "BRAC" (base realignment and closure) committee to work continuously to make sure our bases are not on the "closure" list.
- George Edmundson reported working with the Burlington Chamber of Commerce to develop a website that links businesses in Skagit County that provide discounts to veterans.
- Anita Giannaris, a military spouse, addressed the issue of Whidbey holding an EFM Category 5 rating, which means that military dependents with "highest needs" (medical, developmental) can be stationed here. Whidbey's remote location makes delivery of services and treatment difficult and costly for these families and the community and she suggests the state petition to change the EFM Category rating.
- Rebecca Peck is the caregiver for her father, a WWII veteran. She stated that there is a need for notification to the VA to be built into the state system when a veteran becomes eligible for Medicaid assistance.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.