



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

Joint Committee for Veterans' and Military Affairs

May 2, 2012

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Conway, Bailey, Roach, Orwall, Becker, Carrell, Hudgins, Shin, Swecker.

Members absent: Finn, Hobbs, Hope, Kilmer, Klippert, McCune, Sullivan

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by co-chair Bailey.

The minutes of the November 30, 2011 meeting were approved.

The committee heard a presentation on the economic impact of our military bases from the following panelists:

- Olivia Robinson, Regional Affairs Coordinator, Puget Sound Regional Council,
- Dan Penrose, Project Manager, South Sound Military & Communities Partnership
- Sandra Jarrard, Public Policy Manager, Greater Spokane Incorporated
- Kathy Cocus, Business Development Director, Kitsap Economic Development Alliance
- Jim Slowik, President of the Oak Harbor Navy League, Former Oak Harbor Mayor

Ms. Robinson discussed the [Regional Economic Strategy](#) from the Puget Sound Regional Council. She discussed potential economic strategies related to the military, including more contracting opportunities for local businesses, license and education transferability, preparation for a Base Closure and Realignment Commission, and a creation of a state-level military office.

Mr. Penrose discussed the growth at Joint Base Lewis McChord and the formation of the [South Sound Military and Communities Partnership](#) to serve as the primary point of coordination between the military and the civilian communities.

Sandra Jarrard discussed the importance of Fairchild Air Force Base on the economy of Spokane and Spokane County. She discussed encroachment issues that the base is facing from the neighboring communities.

Kathy Cocus discussed the [Department of Defense impact on Kitsap County](#). She focused on employment in the private sector and contracting with the Navy.

Mr. Slowik discussed the last Base Closure and Realignment Commission process. He also discussed the need for local communities to continue to show support for the base in their community.

Karen Epps, Senate Committee Services, presented a brief overview of veteran- and military-related bills that passed in 2012. Representative Orwall discussed ESHB 2366, which requires certain health professionals to complete education in suicide assessment, treatment, and management.

Jim Sims with the Center for Veterans Issues discussed the Veterans Legislative Coalition's (VLC) priorities, including jobs for veterans. The VLC suggested amending two bills from last session, SHB 2312 and ESHB 2366. The VLC also discussed its legislative priorities for next session, including designation of I-5 as the Purple Heart Trail, allowing reservists to make up missed exams, amending the definition of "resident student" to include a student who is residing in Washington at the time of separation from active service, allowing priority or early registration at colleges and universities for veterans and guard members, and establishing a veteran designation on a driver's license. Lloyd Burroughs with the VLC discussed the issue of veteran's homelessness.

John Lee, Department of Veteran's Affairs, discussed the issue of veteran's homelessness and the possibility of the committee having a work session to further discuss the issue. Mr. Lee also discussed the Walla Walla veteran's home and the Veteran's Raffle.

Mark San Souci, U.S. Department of Defense, discussed legislation that the Legislature has passed recently for the military and their families, including facilitating service members receiving licensure and academic credit for military education and training, facilitating military spouse transition through licensure portability, ensuring deployment separation does not determine child custody decisions, and conforming the disposition of remains with DoD rules.

The committee discussed its interim plan, including the initial ideas from the Executive Committee:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder issues update
- Credentialing for military spouses update
- Economic impact issues update (including contracting)
- Invite Norm Dicks for a discussion on veterans issues
- Jobs for returning veterans discussion
- Tri-Care and other medical benefits discussion
- Veteran homelessness and affordable housing issues discussion
- Whidbey Island Naval Air Station tour

The committee also discussed an interest in learning more about community resources for veterans, the need for greater communication for returning military, and the need to communicate with veterans and military that live in the rural areas of the state. The committee directed staff to look into planning a tour and briefing on Whidbey Island in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

The meeting can be viewed on TVW:

http://www.tvw.org/index.php?option=com_tvoplayer&eventID=2012050040