



Washington State Legislature

411 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504-0466
(360) 786-7432

Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs

267A John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0466
(360) 786-7258

Background

The Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs (JCVMA) is a bipartisan committee formed in 2000 to study veterans', active military forces, and National Guard and reserve component issues and to make recommendations to the Legislature. Additionally, the JCVMA studies the structure and administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Military Department. The committee provides a venue for concepts and ideas to be introduced, vetted and perfected, and makes recommendations resulting from those concepts and ideas to the Legislature.

The JCVMA has 16 members, four members from each major caucus of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, and four members from each major caucus of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The committee has a four member executive committee consisting of one member from each caucus. Two executive committee members serve as co-chairs for the first year of the biennium, and the other two executive committee members serve as co-chairs for the second year of the biennium. One co-chair must be from the House of Representatives and the other must be from the Senate and the co-chairs must be from opposite political caucuses.

The JCVMA meets three to four times a year. The committee meets as soon as possible after session ends, to develop interim plans and to assemble the newly appointed members, appointed in odd-numbered years. The JCVMA usually meets at least one more time during the interim and then around the fall committee assembly days to consider legislative policy ideas. The committee only meets in the interim. While it does not actually pass legislation, the committee does hold hearings and endorses proposed legislation.

Past Activities

The JCVMA has considered various issues in the past and has regularly coordinated with stakeholder groups to provide information at public meetings. Some of the issues discussed at meetings in recent years have included:

- Veteran Transition Programs
- Hiring Programs for Veterans
- Services for Homeless Veterans
- County Veteran Services
- The Soldiers Home and Washington's Veterans' Homes

- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment for Veterans
- Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment for Veterans
- Veteran Suicide Prevention Programs
- Military and Veteran Health Care and Medical Benefits
- Economic Impacts of Military Bases
- Educational Opportunities for Military Children
- Land Use/Transportation Impacts of Military Bases
- Possible Base Realignment and Closures

The JCVMA also has visited military and veteran facilities, including the Soldiers' Home (Orting), Camp Murray (Pierce County), Whidbey Island Naval Station (Oak Harbor), Fairchild Air Force Base (Airway Heights), and Mann-Grandstaff Veterans Administration Medical Center (Spokane).

The committee has considered bills for recommendation to the Legislature, including the following bills prepared for the last two legislative sessions:

2013 Session

- Veteran's preference for the purpose of public employment.
- Allowing for a veteran designation on drivers' licenses and identicards.
- Relating to veterans' and their spouses' and dependents' classification as resident students.
- Providing property tax relief for active duty military personnel injured in the line of duty.

2012 Session

- Extending the age for service in the Washington State Guard.
- Recognizing distinguished military service through the creation of certain military service award special license plates.
- Expediting professional licensing for military spouses.
- Establishing National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day.
- Providing a sales and use tax exemption for mobility enhancing equipment used by disabled veterans in vehicle adaptations.
- Access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.
- Updating veterans' preference.
- Requiring certain mental health professionals to complete continuing education in suicide prevention.

The committee website, including a current membership roster as well as meeting agenda and minutes from previous years, can be found here:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/jointcommittees/JCVMA/Pages/default.aspx>.



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Stakeholder Contacts

The following groups have been active in JCVMA business over the years:

- **The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs**
Provides services and outreach to resident veterans and families.

Director: Lourdes E. (Alfie) Alvarado-Ramos
Contact: Heidi Audette, Communications Director
(360) 725-2154
HeidiA@DVA.WA.GOV

- **Washington Military Department**
Includes the Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Emergency Management Operations.

Adjutant General: Maj. Gen. Bret D. Daugherty
Contact: Nancy Bickford, Special Assistant to the Director
(253) 512-7712
nancy.bickford@mil.wa.gov

- **Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee**
Advises the Governor and the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs on issues and programs concerning veterans.

Chair: Owen McCurdy Jr.
Contact: Heidi Audette, Communications Director (WDVA)
(360) 725-2154
HeidiA@DVA.WA.GOV

- **Veterans Legislative Coalition**
An independent organization that monitors veteran-related legislation in Washington.

Chair: Jim Sims
(360) 791-1401
jim.ginny1@gmail.com

- **Office of the Governor**

Contact: Andi Smith, Sr. Policy Advisor (Veterans Issues)
(360) 902-0655
Andi.Smith@gov.wa.gov

John Lane, Sr. Policy Advisor (Military Issues)
(360) 902-0651
John.Lane@gov.wa.gov

- **Washington State Attorney General's Office**

Attorney General: Bob Ferguson

Contact: Travis Alley, Veterans Outreach Specialist
(206) 464-6431
travisa@atg.wa.gov

- **King County Regional Veterans Initiative**

Director: Greg Ferland
(206) 263-9062
csd@kingcounty.gov

- **Department of Defense**

Contact: Mark San Souci, Northwest Regional State Liaison
(571) 309-4622 & (253) 273-2214
Mark.B.SanSouci.civ@mail.mil