Washington State
House of Representatives
Office of Program Research

BILL ANALYSIS

Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans Committee

SSB 5338

Brief Description: Concerning the veterans affairs advisory committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, Boehnke, Conway, Dhingra, Lovick, Salomon, Shewmake, Slatter, Trudeau, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, C.; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies the membership of the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.

Hearing Date: 3/18/25

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.
The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) provides advice and makes recommendations to the Governor and the Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). The VAAC consists of 17 members appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. The VAAC members include:

- one representative of the Washington Soldiers' Home and Colony in Orting;
- one representative of the Washington Veterans' Home at Retsil;
- three members, one from each of the three congressionally chartered or nationally recognized veterans service organizations with the largest membership in the state;
- 10 members representing the congressionally chartered or nationally recognized veterans service organizations that have at least one active chapter in the state; and

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- two members who are veterans at large.

The Governor must ensure that appointments represent all geographical parts of the state, as well as minority and women veteran viewpoints. The VAAC must appoint members to serve as liaisons to each of the state veterans' homes, unless the home has a representative appointed to the VAAC.

State Veterans' Homes.
The WDVA serves veterans in four veterans' homes, located in Orting, Retsil, Spokane, and Walla Walla.

Summary of Bill:

The VAAC must appoint members to serve as liaisons to each of the state veterans' homes, regardless of whether the home has a representative appointed to the VAAC. The two VAAC positions representing the state veterans' homes in Orting and Retsil are replaced by two at-large positions.

Instead of 10 VAAC members representing veterans service organizations with at least one active chapter in the state, the group of 10 VAAC members must be chosen as follows:
- members representing congressionally chartered or nationally recognized veterans service organizations that have at least one active chapter in Washington, nominations for which may be forwarded from each organization to the Governor by the Director of the WDVA;
- one member may be a veteran who is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe; and
- one member may be a current or former member of the Washington National Guard.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.