

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VETERANS MILITARY AND HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Myers at 1:30 P.M. on February 25, 2008 in Room 784 of the Docking Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Bob Bethell - excused  
Representative Marti Crow - excused  
Representative Barbara Craft - excused

Committee staff present:

Athena Andaya, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Barbara Lewerenz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Mario Goico  
Jeff Russell, Director, Legislative Services  
Captain Eric Pippin, Commander of Capitol Police, Troop T  
Captain Dan Brown, Troop Commander of Capitol Police  
Wayne Bollig, Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs  
Darrell Bencken, VFW  
Jack Fowler, Chairman, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

Others attending:

See attached list.

Moved by Representative Kelsey, seconded by Representative Proehl for approval of the Minutes of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security held February 13, 2008. Motion Carried.

Chairman Myers announced that February 26 is the last day for p.m. committee meetings prior to turn around. He requested the committee's permission to work the bills on which hearings were being held today.

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Goico, who introduced **HB-2905**. This bill minimizes some of the security risks in the Capitol Complex by designating a safety and security position in each state agency that will serve as a liaison between the agency and the capitol police at no cost. (See Attachment 1)

Representative Goico introduced Jeffrey M. Russell, Director of Legislative Administrative Services, Captain Eric Pippin and Captain Dan Brown Troop Commanders of the Capitol Police.

Mr. Russell testified as a proponent of **HB-2905**. He stated that if each agency were to designate a current employee to serve as a security liaison, communications flow would be quicker, more accurate and more effective. (See Attachment 2)

Moved by Representative Colloton, seconded by Representative Spalding for approval of **HB-2905**. Motion Carried.

Captain Pippin and Captain Brown answered questions regarding current security needs emphasizing the importance of good order, good communication and training for real events. Discussion emphasized the need to maintain a balance between strong security and the open atmosphere of a public building, with the goal of being a pro-active efficient law enforcement staff with state employees trained in safety awareness.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee at 1:30 PM on February 25, 2007 in Room 784 of the Capitol.

Chairman Myers appointed Rep. Goico to carry the bill on the House Floor

Representative Colloton requested Captain Pippin to make a future recommendation to the committee regarding the necessary level of scrutiny of individuals entering the Capitol Building that would maintain an adequate level of security to protect those who visit and work in the Capitol.

Chairman Myers recognized Wayne Bolling, Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs, who testified as a proponent of **HB-2923**. He stated that the mission of Veteran Services is to provide advocacy and resources to veterans in Kansas and their families. Staff shortages have prevented them from reaching all qualified veterans, especially those in rural and remote areas. **HB-2923** will increase the ability to reach the underserved veterans; lower the costs of other state agencies assisting these individuals; and increase the number of dollars back to Kansas citizens in the form of benefits. (See Attachment 3)

Chairman Myers recognized Darrell Bencken, VFW, who testified as a proponent of **HB-2923**. He supported Wayne Bolling's comments and stated the VFW was in total agreement KCVA on **HB-2923**. He emphasized that a large portion of the veteran population was being overlooked in the smaller communities. This bill will assist in reaching these veterans and family members. (Attachment 4)

Chairman Myers recognized Jack Fowler, Chairman, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs. Mr. Fowler said that compared to other states, Kansas is not taking care of veterans as it should; and that by establishing a mobile van, the KCVA will be able to do outreach that previously has not been possible.

Moved by Representative Dan Johnson, seconded by Representative Goico for approval of **HB-2923**. Motion Carried.

Discussion regarding funding **HB-2923** followed. Representative Wilk recommended that the committee request the Legislative Division of Post Audit do an assessment to determine the number of people receiving state assistance who might qualify for veterans benefits. The conversion of these benefits could result in a substantial savings to the state that could offset the cost of funding the bill.

Chairman Myers directed Representative Ruff to carry the bill and request the audit suggested by Representative Wilk.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.