

## MINUTES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lee Tafanelli at 5:00 P.M. on January 13, 2006 in Room 234-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

## Committee staff present:

Amy Deckard, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Mike Corrigan, Revisor of Statutes  
Gina Bowes, Committee Secretary

## Conferees appearing before the committee:

Martin C. Boire, National Director of Support our Troops, Inc.  
Carmen Alldritt, Director, Division of Vehicles, Department of Revenue  
Jim Bunker, Veteran Information Network  
Chuck Yunker, Adjutant, American Legion Department of Kansas  
Jefferson Lawson, Past State Commander, Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars  
David Brader, Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans Department of Kansas

## Others attending:

See attached list.

- Attachment 1 Overview of **HB 2746**
- Attachment 2 Mission Statement of National Support Our Troops, Inc.
- Attachment 3 Testimony by Carmen Alldritt, Director, Division of Vehicles
- Attachment 4 Testimony by James A. Bunker
- Attachment 5 Testimony by Charles M. Yunker, Adjutant, American Legion
- Attachment 6 Testimony by Jefferson D. Lawson, Past State Commander for Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Attachment 7 Testimony by David Brader, Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans

**Hearing on HB 2746 - Support our troops license plate.**

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research, explained sections of **HB 2746** (Attachment 1) which authorizes the issuance of this license plate. Staff also explained the bill's amendment exempting the personalized license plate fee.

Martin Boire, National President/Director & CEO of Support our Troops, Inc., presented testimony in support of **HB 2746** (Attachment 2). Mr. Boire presented an overview of their charitable organization and how they are working in communities throughout the nation to help veterans and their families. Mr. Boire expressed concern that the different attendant start-up costs the state and other veteran organizations may have for the issuance of these plates may make the plates less accessible to Kansas citizens, thereby effectuating monetary loss to Support Our Troops aid to veterans and their families.

Carmen Alldritt, Director of Vehicles, Department of Revenue, presented testimony in a neutral position on **HB 2746**. (Attachment 3). Ms. Alldritt stated **HB 2746** as proposed, exempts the Support Our Troops organization from the required \$40 personalized plate fee and that to be consistent with other organizational distinctive license plates, the Division requested that this plate be subject to the same provisions. Ms. Alldritt stood for questions and clarified the \$40 personalized plate fee, stating the money goes into plate production which is separate from the initial development cost.

James Bunker, Veteran Information Network, presented testimony in a neutral position on **HB 2746**. (Attachment 4). Mr. Bunker expressed support for the license plate while expressing concern related to proceeds going to Support Our Troops, Inc., when the funds could be going to the existing relief fund established at the Attorney General's office. Mr. Bunker stood for questions.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Veterans Affairs Select Committee at 5:00 P.M. on January 13, 2006 in Room 234-N of the Capitol.

Chair Tafarielli requested Mr. Boire of Support our Troops, Inc., return to explain the process by which monies are dispensed from Support our Troops, Inc. national organization back to the veterans of the state of Kansas. Mr. Boire stated the dispensation of all monies would come from the national organization's accounting firm with an independent accounting policy. Revenue would then be dispersed through existing entities at the state level; some within the armed forces, such as the Army Relief Fund, Marine Corp. Education Fund, the National Guard, and Family Readiness. Dispensation would also occur with local organizations who are aware of veterans' needs. Mr. Boire stated that with the revenue streams and factors the national organization has in place, there should be a 70% to 75% passthrough to the state level.

Chair Tafarielli closed the hearing on **HB 2746**.

Chair Tafarielli went on to the next order of business, a briefing on the Kansas Commission of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Service Organizations Joint Employment Agreement and recognized Representative Candy Ruff.

Representative Ruff gave the Committee a brief history of veteran organizations and services. She presented the Committee with a solution to improve service to veterans which is to dissolve the Joint Employment Agreement and go to a grant system.

Charles M. Yunker, Adjutant for the American Legion, Department of Kansas, presented testimony (Attachment 5) and spoke to the history of the relationship between the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Mr. Yunker stated that in the American Legion's view, the best way to provide services to the veterans of Kansas would be to establish a grant program with a duration of at least five years with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars which would report directly to the Legislature.

Jefferson D. Lawson, Past State Commander, Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars presented testimony (Attachment 6) encouraging the Committee to strengthen the partnership with the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the purpose of serving the needs of Kansas veterans. He also expressed support of the grant system proposed by Representative Ruff.

David W. Brader, Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans, presented testimony (Attachment 7) requesting consideration be given to not only two Veterans Service Organizations, but to all Veterans Service Organizations.

Chair Tafarielli expressed his and the Committee's commitment for a workable solution to serve the needs of the increasing population of Kansas veterans now and in the future.

Mr. Yunker, Mr. Lawson and Mr. Brader stood for questions. General discussion ensued related to the variety of services, accreditation and certification offered by the Veterans Service Organizations in Kansas as well as other states.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. The next meeting will be "on call of the Chair".

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Lee Tafarielli, Chair