

HCS HJR 71 -- SALES TAX FOR VETERANS' SERVICES

SPONSOR: Day

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Veterans by a vote of 10 to 0.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment authorizes a dedicated sales tax of one-eighth of 1% for funding veterans' homes, services, and programs. The tax becomes effective January 1, 2009, and terminates December 31, 2016, unless reauthorized by the voters. If reauthorized, the tax will be reduced to one-tenth of 1%. The sales tax must be reauthorized by the voters every 10 years.

The amendment constitutionally establishes the Missouri Veterans' Commission within the Department of Public Safety consisting of nine members, five of whom will be veterans appointed by the Governor. The other four will be members from the General Assembly, two from the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker, and two from the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tem, each serving a single two-year term.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Effect on General Revenue Fund of a cost of \$0 or \$65,250 in FY 2009, an income of \$0 or \$35,482,463 in FY 2010, and an income of \$0 or \$37,256,586 in FY 2011. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$0 or \$56,432,750 in FY 2009, \$0 or \$112,865,500 in FY 2010, and \$0 or \$112,865,500 in FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that there is a solemn obligation to meet the needs of our veterans by providing the services they deserve. With all the deployments, the high number of seriously injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and an aging Vietnam Veteran population, the Missouri Veterans' Commission needs increased funding to provide the necessary services to these veterans. A dedicated funding source established by a sales tax will provide the needed funding instead of relying on moneys from gaming boat admissions and general revenue.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Fisher; Rich Heigert, Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations and American Legion, Department of Missouri and Vietnam Veterans of America, Missouri State Council; Dewey Riehn, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Missouri Department; and Military Officers Association of America, State Council.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.