

HCS HB 2339 -- MILITARY COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT

SPONSOR: Lynch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill creates the "Missouri Military Community Reinvestment Program" within the Department of Economic Development to assist military communities in supporting and sustaining their installations, to encourage communities to initiate coordinated response programs and action plans in advance of federal government realignment and closure decisions, and to support community efforts to attract new or expanded military missions and specifies that the appropriation for the program may not exceed \$300,000.

The department and the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission must invite public comments on the administration of the program and jointly develop and establish procedures for implementation of the program. The department must evaluate each application and make recommendations to the commission, which will approve or reject any recommended application. Upon approval, the department will administer grant awards, including tracking and monitoring the administration of the grant funds and whether grantees have achieved the goals set forth in the application.

Grants will not exceed \$300,000 per year per grantee. Eligible amounts for grants include certain match requirements based on an applicant's years in operation. Applications must include a coordinated program of work or a plan of action specifying how the project will be administered and accomplished, including a plan for ensuring cooperation between civilian and military authorities in the conduct of activities and a plan for public participation. The grants may be used for public-to-public partnerships with military installations, local or regional marketing to communicate the value of military installations and military service, programs to assist with the diversification of the economy of the community, performing research regarding factors that affect attractiveness of the community for future military investments, programs to develop or improve the quality of life in military communities, and developing plans to reuse closed or realigned military installations or facilities.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill would help fund programs for communities to promote their community and the military installation within it when federal base realignment and closures are discussed or when the Department of Defense is expanding

missions. The military installation across the state are economic drivers in their communities and it is important for the state's economy to protect and expand the missions of those bases.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lynch; Kent Thomas, Sustainable Ozarks Partnership; H. Keith Crumley, Whiteman Airforce Base Community Council; and Dewey Rhein, VFW.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that six other states have programs similar to this. He also discussed the role of his office and the eight organizations that would qualify for the grants.

Testifying on the bill was Joe Driskill, Office of the Military Advocate.