

HCS HB 1485 -- VETERANS

SPONSOR: Rehder

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 15 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1485.

This bill authorizes any veteran who is approved for admission into the Missouri veterans' home nearest to the veteran's residence but who has not been admitted to a Missouri veterans' home due to a lack of vacancy, resides at a location where there are no vacancies at a care facility that has contracted with the Department of Veterans Affairs for the care of veterans within 50 miles, meets the requirements for admission to a skilled nursing facility, and has not been notified by the Missouri Veterans Commission of a relevant vacancy, to receive a voucher from the state for an amount that is equal to the average cost to the state to house one veteran for one month in a Missouri veterans home.

The voucher will be used to pay for the costs of being housed at a skilled nursing facility. The voucher will be issued on a monthly basis by the Missouri Veterans Commission as long as the veteran can pay for room and board at a facility in a timely manner.

Issuance of a voucher will not affect any eligible veteran's position for placement in a Missouri veterans home.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1064 (2019).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will assist veterans that are currently waiting for a vacancy at a Missouri Veterans Home and will help in alleviating the queue at these homes.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Rehder.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill will take funding from the Missouri Veterans Commission and that it also takes some authority away from the commission.

Testifying against the bill was Charles W. Goodin, The American

Legion and Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill discussed fiscal constraints at the Missouri Veterans Commission and that the wait list for veterans at Missouri Veterans Homes has been decreasing. It was also stated that there are currently beds open at Missouri Veterans Homes, but some veterans forgo these beds because of the distance relative to their current homes.

Testifying on the bill was Grace Link, Missouri Veterans Commission.