

Bill as Introduced

SB 508 - AS INTRODUCED

2010 SESSION

10-2946
05/03

SENATE BILL **508**

AN ACT establishing the state office of veterans services.

SPONSORS: Sen. Barnes, Jr., Dist 17; Sen. Lasky, Dist 13; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Hassan,
Dist 23; Rep. Pepino, Hills 11; Rep. Baldasaro, Rock 3; Rep. K. Roberts, Ches 3

COMMITTEE: Election Law and Veterans' Affairs

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes the state office of veterans services, which assumes the primary duties and responsibilities of the state veterans council. The state veterans council retains oversight authority for the office of veterans services.

This bill is a request of the state veterans council.

.....

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in *bold italics*.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Ten

AN ACT establishing the state office of veterans services.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 State Veterans Council; Renamed State Office of Veterans Services. The title of chapter RSA
2 115 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

3 STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

4 2 State Veterans Council; Reference Change. Amend RSA 115:1, II to read as follows:

5 II. The members of the council shall meet not less than semi-annually to review activities of
6 the state [~~veterans council~~] *office of veterans services* and provide guidance to the director of the
7 state [~~veterans council~~] *office of veterans services* on the adequacy and delivery of [~~council~~] *office*
8 programs. The council may designate one of its members to serve as liaison to the state veterans
9 advisory committee.

10 3 Compensation; Reference Change. Amend RSA 115:3 to read as follows:

11 115:3 Compensation. No member of the council shall receive compensation for services rendered
12 but his *or her* necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his *or her* official duties shall be
13 paid from the appropriation for [~~said council~~] *the office of veterans services*.

14 4 Director of the State Office of Veterans Services. Amend RSA 115:4 to read as follows:

15 115:4 Director of [~~Veterans Council~~] *State Office of Veterans Services*.

16 I. The council shall, with the approval of the governor and council, appoint a director of the
17 state [~~veterans council~~] *office of veterans services*, who shall be an honorably separated veteran of
18 a war in which the United States was engaged. The director shall serve during the pleasure of the
19 council and shall perform the duties listed in paragraph II.

20 II. The director of the [~~council~~] *office* shall:

21 (a) Supervise the activities of a statewide service delivery structure which assists
22 veterans and family members in identifying eligibility for veterans' benefits, filing claims,
23 coordinating benefits with other state and federal agencies, and reviewing claims decisions for
24 appeals or waivers of unfavorable decisions.

25 (b) Identify and develop legislative proposals to improve delivery of services, review and
26 monitor legislation introduced by others, testify at hearings, and prepare legislative fiscal note work
27 sheets. The director shall coordinate, implement, and administer programs mandated by the
28 legislature.

29 (c) Prepare the agency budget and administer and monitor expenditures for the [~~council~~]
30 *office of veterans services*.

1 (d) Develop~~[-interact]~~ and coordinate agency programs in conjunction with the ~~[federal]~~
2 **United States** Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other federal, state, local, and private
3 organizations.

4 (e) Represent the **veterans** council at various state and national conventions,
5 conferences, and public functions and provide supervision to the ~~[agency's]~~ **office of veterans**
6 **services'** public relations program.

7 (f) Perform such other duties as the **veterans** council shall determine.

8 5 State Office of Veterans Services Established; Duties. Amend RSA 115:6 to read as follows:

9 115:6 **State Office of Veterans Services Established; Duties.**

10 I. **There is established a state office of veterans services under the supervision of the**
11 **director of state veterans services appointed pursuant to RSA 115:4.** The state ~~[veterans council]~~
12 **office of veterans services** shall assist veterans who are residents of this state or their dependents to
13 secure all benefits or preferences to which they may be entitled under any state or federal laws or
14 regulations. The ~~[council]~~ **office** shall employ such assistance as may be necessary, within the limits of
15 the appropriation made therefor, subject to the rules of the state division of personnel.

16 II.(a) Biennially beginning July 1, 2009, the state ~~[veterans council]~~ **office of veterans**
17 **services** shall publish a state veterans handbook. The state veterans handbook shall include the
18 following information:

19 (1) Points of contact for all federal, state, local, and nonprofit veterans agencies,
20 departments, councils, hospitals, clinics, and other organizations offering services, benefits, and programs
21 to New Hampshire veterans, including addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

22 (2) A description of the services, benefits, and programs offered by each entity listed
23 under subparagraph (a)(1).

24 (b) The state ~~[veterans council]~~ **office of veterans services** shall distribute the state
25 veterans handbook through the state, local, and nonprofit entities listed under subparagraph (a)(1).

26 (c) The state ~~[veterans council]~~ **office of veterans services** may accept and expend for
27 purposes of publishing and distributing the state veterans handbook, any donations, grants,
28 bequests, and contributions which become available for such purposes.

29 6 Transfer of Power and Duties. The transfer of powers and duties from the state veterans
30 council to the state office of veterans services shall include all of the books, papers, records,
31 equipment, unexpended appropriations or other funds, and other property or obligations of any kind
32 associated with such powers and duties.

33 7 Replace "Veterans Council" with "Office of Veterans Services." Amend the following RSA
34 provisions by replacing "veterans council" or "veteran's council" or "veterans' council" with "office of
35 veterans services": RSA 21:50, I(b)(21); 72:29, VII; 94:1-a, I(b); 115-A:2, VII, 115:8; 115-A:10; 115-
36 A:14; 115-A:17; 115-A:21; 115-A:23, I, 115-B:5, 465:3; 465:5; 465:11; and 651:4-b, II(a).

37 8 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

CHAPTER 119
SB 508 – FINAL VERSION

2010 SESSION

10-2946
05/03

SENATE BILL **508**

AN ACT establishing the state office of veterans services.

SPONSORS: Sen. Barnes, Jr., Dist 17; Sen. Lasky, Dist 13; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Hassan,
Dist 23; Rep. Pepino, Hills 11; Rep. Baldasaro, Rock 3; Rep. K. Roberts, Ches 3

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Ten

AN ACT establishing the state office of veterans services.

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1 119:1 State Veterans Council; Renamed State Office of Veterans Services. The title of chapter
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3 STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

4 119:2 State Veterans Council; Reference Change. Amend RSA 115:1, II to read as follows:

5 II. The members of the council shall meet not less than semi-annually to review activities of
6 the state [~~veterans council~~] *office of veterans services* and provide guidance to the director of the
7 state [~~veterans council~~] *office of veterans services* on the adequacy and delivery of [~~council~~] *office*
8 programs. The council may designate one of its members to serve as liaison to the state veterans
9 advisory committee.

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12 but his *or her* necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his *or her* official duties shall be
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14 119:4 Director of the State Office of Veterans Services. Amend RSA 115:4 to read as follows:

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18 a war in which the United States was engaged. The director shall serve during the pleasure of the
19 council and shall perform the duties listed in paragraph II.

20 II. The director of the [~~council~~] *office* shall:

21 (a) Supervise the activities of a statewide service delivery structure which assists
22 veterans and family members in identifying eligibility for veterans' benefits, filing claims,
23 coordinating benefits with other state and federal agencies, and reviewing claims decisions for
24 appeals or waivers of unfavorable decisions.

25 (b) Identify and develop legislative proposals to improve delivery of services, review and
26 monitor legislation introduced by others, testify at hearings, and prepare legislative fiscal note work
27 sheets. The director shall coordinate, implement, and administer programs mandated by the
28 legislature.

29 (c) Prepare the agency budget and administer and monitor expenditures for the [~~council~~]
30 *office of veterans services*.

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SB 508 – FINAL VERSION
- Page 2 -

1 (d) Develop~~[-interact]~~ and coordinate agency programs in conjunction with the [federal]
2 **United States** Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other federal, state, local, and private
3 organizations.

4 (e) Represent the **veterans** council at various state and national conventions,
5 conferences, and public functions and provide supervision to the [agency's] **office of veterans**
6 **services'** public relations program.

7 (f) Perform such other duties as the **veterans** council shall determine.

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9 follows:

10 115:6 **State Office of Veterans Services Established; Duties.**

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12 **director of state veterans services appointed pursuant to RSA 115:4.** The state [~~veterans council~~]
13 **office of veterans services** shall assist veterans who are residents of this state or their dependents to
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16 the appropriation made therefor, subject to the rules of the state division of personnel.

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26 veterans handbook through the state, local, and nonprofit entities listed under subparagraph (a)(1).

27 (c) The state [~~veterans council~~] **office of veterans services** may accept and expend for
28 purposes of publishing and distributing the state veterans handbook, any donations, grants,
29 bequests, and contributions which become available for such purposes.

30 119:6 Transfer of Power and Duties. The transfer of powers and duties from the state veterans
31 council to the state office of veterans services shall include all of the books, papers, records,
32 equipment, unexpended appropriations or other funds, and other property or obligations of any kind
33 associated with such powers and duties.

34 119:7 Replace "Veterans Council" with "Office of Veterans Services." Amend the following RSA
35 provisions by replacing "veterans council" or "veteran's council" or "veterans' council" with "office of
36 veterans services": RSA 21:50, I(b)(21); 72:29, VII; 94:1-a, I(b); 115-A:2, VII; 115:8; 115-A:10; 115-

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SB 508 -- FINAL VERSION
- Page 3 -

- 1 A:14; 115-A:17; 115-A:21; 115-A:23, I; 115-B:5; 465:3; 465:5; 465:11; and 651:4-b, II(a).
- 2 119:8 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.
- 3 Approved: June 1, 2010
- 4 Effective Date: July 31, 2010

Committee Minutes

**SENATE CALENDAR NOTICE
ELECTION LAW AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

- ✓ Senator Bette Lasky Chairman
- ✓ Senator Matthew Houde V Chairman
- ✓ Senator Amanda Merrill
- ✓ Senator John Barnes, Jr.
- Senator Sharon Carson

For Use by Senate Clerk's Office ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Docket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calendar
Proof: <input type="checkbox"/>	Calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Status

Date: March 3, 2010

HEARINGS

Monday

3/8/2010

ELECTION LAW AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

LOB 101

8:30 AM

(Name of Committee)

(Place)

(Time)

EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY FOLLOW

8:30 AM SB508

establishing the state office of veterans services.

8:40 AM SB509

establishing the New Hampshire medal of honor fund and repealing the New Hampshire service award.

Sponsors:

SB508

Sen. John Barnes, Jr.
Rep. Alfred Baldasaro

Sen. Bette Lasky
Rep. Kris Roberts

Sen. Sharon Carson
Sen. Margaret Hassan

Rep. Leo Pepino

SB509

Sen. John Barnes, Jr.
Rep. Leo Pepino

Sen. Margaret Hassan
Rep. Alfred Baldasaro

Sen. Bette Lasky
Rep. Kris Roberts

Sen. Sharon Carson

*Start 8:30
end 8:48*

Kathryn Cummings 271-3207

Sen. Bette Lasky

Chairman

Election Law and Veteran's Affairs

Hearing Report

TO: Members of the Senate

FROM: Shannon Whitehead, *Legislative Aide*

RE: Hearing report on SB 508: AN ACT establishing the state office veterans services.

HEARING DATE: March 8, 2010

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT: Senator Lasky, Senator Merrill, Senator Barnes and Senator Carson.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT: Senator Houde and Senator Carson

Sponsor(s): Sen. Barnes, Jr., Dist 17; Sen. Lasky, Dist 13; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Hassan, Dist 23; Rep. Pepino, Hills 11; Rep. Baldasaro, Rock 3; Rep. K. Roberts, Ches 3

What the bill does: This bill establishes the state office of veterans services, which assumes the primary duties and responsibilities of the state veterans council. The state veterans council retains oversight authority for the office of veterans services.

This bill is a request of the state veterans council.

Who supports the bill: Senator Barnes, Senator Lasky, Rep. Kris Roberts, Barry Conway (NH Veterans Home) Dennis Viola, Mary Morin (NH Veterans Council), Paul Bernard (NH State Veterans Council) and Carter Higginbotham (NH State Veterans Council).

Who opposes the bill: No one appeared in opposition.

Summary of testimony received:

Senator Barnes: Prime Sponsor

- Hearing started at 8:32am.
- Brought this legislation forward on behalf of a constituent. The bill was late being filed because we wanted to make sure the bill was nice and clean before we introduced the legislation.
- Senator Barnes said there are Co-sponsors on this bill representing the House Committee of State Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Rep. Kris Roberts

- In support of the bill 100% and urges the committee support.

Mary Morin (Director of the State Veterans Council)

- Our agency made a request of Senator Barnes to sponsor this legislation. We are very much in support of this bill.
- We make this request for an agency name change to prevent confusion and to provide an agency name that will better clarify and communicate that we exist as a state agency.
- This agency has evolved tremendously since the State Veterans Council inception in 1943 with RSA 115:1. What started as a 3 members unreimbursed council of veterans who oversaw a Director to perform the duties as listed in RSA 115:4 has currently expanded to perform its duties in support of over 13,000 veterans located in the State of New Hampshire. The council is currently required to meet on a semi-annual basis to discuss the adequacy and delivery of service programs to veterans and their families.
- The agency requests no change in the actual 3 member council, agency duties, or realignment of reporting. It is simply our request to differentiate between the council, agency and other service organizations across the state. The agency feels this is the best and virtually a cost-free solution.
- We chose "Office of Veterans Services" for the simple reason that we saw no need to establish a "department", "division", "bureau" or any other title which would require changes in leadership designations.
- Mary Morin stated that the agency feels strongly that the name change provision will bring the agency more in line with other states. Most other states have distinguishing designations that are readily discernable by veterans, service organizations and legislative bodies as state entities and what the function of that entity is.
- The agency works hand in hand with federal legislators, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (including the Board and Court of Veterans Appeals) and other state institutions; we feel this name

change would be of greater benefit to veterans by providing less confusion regarding our mission and more of an impact to provision of assistance.

- Mary Morin expressed to the committee that they have done some investigation on the cost of this proposal. The agency received a quote from the Office of Information Technology for a change of the website template. This quote amounted to \$250.00. Other than letterhead and business cards, necessary to bring this to fruition.
- Mary Morin handed in a letter of support from the Reserve Officer's Association from President, David Kenney.
- Senator Barnes told the committee that Senator Carson and Senator Hassan are apart of the State Veterans Advisory Committee.
- Senator Merrill asked how it was all funded, Mary Morin stated that the agency is 100% General Fund

Funding: n/a

Future Action: The committee voted ought to pass on the bill. First motion made by Senator Barnes, second motion made by Senator Carson. Senator Barnes will report the bill out.

KC

So, my constituent is Mary Morin, and Mary is behind me and I would appreciate it if she would come forward and explain why she came to me and said this bill is so important to her and to the State of New Hampshire. I think Mary would be able to explain this very well and we also have Representative Roberts, I believe behind me, and he is also one of the co-sponsors and he sits on the Veterans' Committee as you know in the House.

And with that, if you don't have any questions, if you wanted to know who's going to win the World Series, I can tell you this year. But other than that, I can not predict. It's not going to be the Cubs; it's going to be the Red Sox. I'm sorry to inform you. Unless your boy gets transferred to Boston, he will not have a World Series ring unless he comes to Boston.

For those of you who don't know...

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Senator Merrill, do you have a question?

Senator Amanda Merrill, D. 21: No.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Oh, okay.

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr., D. 17: The reason I brought that up to you folks behind me is that some of you might not know it, but Senator Merrill has a son who plays major league baseball and unfortunately he's with the hapless Cubbies. He played about seventy games last year and he's down there in spring training and trying to earn a spot and he played for what, Exeter Academy is where he played?

Senator Amanda Merrill, D. 21: Mm hmm.

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr., D. 17: Down at Exeter Academy is where he played his ball, he didn't play over in Durham, but he played in Exeter.

So, what else do you want to tell us about that boy of yours?

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Senator Barnes and Senator Merrill, while this is...

Senator Amanda Merrill, D. 21: See you at the World Series.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: While this is endlessly wonderful and we're very proud of Senator Merrill's son.

K

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr., D. 17: See if she can get us tickets. I'm sure she can get tickets for everybody behind me here.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Oh, okay. Alright. In the case of that, thank you, Senator Barnes.

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr., D. 17: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: The Chair calls Representative Roberts.

Representative Kris Roberts: Representative Kris Roberts, from Keene, New Hampshire, Cheshire 3 in there, some other people say Cheshire 3 in there. I support one hundred percent of what Senator Barnes said and Mary will say it a heck of a lot better than both us. That's all I have to say.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Okay. Thank you, even the part about Senator Merrill's son, you support. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Representative.

Representative Roberts: You're welcome.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: I don't see any other Representatives. Let's see, Mary Morin. The Chair calls Mary Morin, thank you.

Mary Morin: Good morning, Madam Chair.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Good morning.

Ms. Morin: Committee members. If you would allow, I have some written testimony that I would like to present for the Retired Officers Association. It was presented to me last night and the request was made too. **Please see Attachment #1.**

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: We would love that. Thank you.

Ms. Morin: I'll present that to you.

Kathy Cummings: Thank you.

Ms. Morin: I also have some packages with the statutes that cover our existence currently as it is and State Department names as they stand across the fifty-four State Departments and other statutes that may pertain to this issue that may be of interest to you. So, I would like to present those as well. **Please see Attachment #2.** Thank you very much.

KE

I want to start...

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: I'm sorry, Mary.

Ms. Morin: I'm sorry.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Did you give your name and address and who your represent for the record, please?

Ms. Morin: I'm about to.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Thank you.

Ms. Morin: For the record, my name is Mary Morin. I am the Director of the New Hampshire State Veterans Council from the great Town of Raymond.

I want to start off by giving you a quote and that quote is, *"For those of you who don't know what the State Veterans' Council is, I'll tell you that each State has their own State Department of Veterans' Affairs or office or division of veterans affairs or services. And that's exactly what we are and do for the State of New Hampshire."*

Each one of our briefings or event that we attend across the state, starts with an introduction such as this. Each phone call that confuses us with the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Manchester, Concord, Dover, Rochester, Veterans' Councils, begins with a statement like this. Each meeting with a veteran or their family member starts with a statement such as this.

I've made that paragraph purposely sound a little bit redundant, because that's exactly the statement that we have to make. We're continually confused with Veterans' Councils from each city. Veterans' Council from each county with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and we'd like to clarify that a little bit and we think this will help.

It's with that in mind and several other factors that our agency made a request of Senator Barnes to sponsor this legislation, and as a result, I'm here to speak briefly and strongly in favor of and I do have written testimony as well for Senate Bill 508. **Please see Attachment #3.**

As I mentioned before, we make this request to prevent confusion and to provide an agency name that we think will better clarify and communicate that we exist as a state agency. This agency has evolved tremendously since

PC

the State Veterans Council inception in 1943 with RSA 115:1, which is one of the ones I provided in the package that I gave you.

What started as a three-member unreimbursed council of veterans who oversaw a Director to perform the duties as listed in RSA 115:4, which I've also provided. We've currently expanded to perform duties in support of over 130,000 veterans located in the State of New Hampshire. The Council is currently required to meet on a semi-annual basis to discuss the adequacy and delivery of service programs to veterans and their families.

We request no change in the actual three-member council, any agency duties or realignment of reporting. It's simply our request to differentiate between the Council, the agency and other service organizations across the state and we feel that this is the best and virtually cost-free solution.

Additionally, we chose the name Office of Veterans Services for the simple reason that we saw no need to establish a department or a division or a bureau or any other title which would require changes in leadership designations. And again, I've provided a statute in the package that defines commissioner, department, division, and so on and so forth. So, I thought that may be of interest to you.

We do feel strongly that the name change provision will bring the agency more in line with other states. If you note on the state department listing that I have provided also, I've listed each state department and what their title is. I've broken it down on the back to identify that the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are twenty-six or services, twenty-six for the fifty-four total state departments and then it goes so on and so forth. And I've also taken *Webster's Dictionary* and defined department, office and division to help further clarify that.

Because we work hand in hand with federal legislators and United States Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Board and Court of Veterans Appeals and other state institutions, we do feel this name change would be a greater benefit to veterans by providing less confusion regarding our mission and more of an impact in the provision of that assistance.

As a final note, I want to add that we've investigated the cost of this proposal. We received a quote from the Office of Information Technology for a change of the website template, which we believe is the only cost that would be associated with this, and that quote was \$250.00. Other than letterhead and business cards, which we can change at no cost and which we have to purchase anyway, there is no cost for that change.

KC

So, it appears to us there's no other fiscal appropriation that would be necessary in order for this name change to take place. And with that, I would be happy to answer any questions and as always, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Thank you, Mary. Any questions? Senator Merrill?

Senator Amanda Merrill, D. 21: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, your position would be, you're the Director of the Council currently. So, you would be Director of the Office of Veterans Services if the name change went through?

Ms. Morin: Well, currently I actually have brought along our organizational chart as well, if you'd like me to present that to you. Currently, there's a three-member appointed council of which we have one member here today, who is appointed by the Governor and then they oversee. These are semi-annual, bi-annual meetings that we have with the Council and then I oversee the agency itself. So, we don't want to see any changes to that Council and their efforts and their mission either.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Any other questions? Senator Barnes, you're all set I would imagine?

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr., D. 17: I have no questions of my constituent.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. Morin: Thank you very much, appreciate it.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: I have Carter Higginbotham from New Hampshire Veterans Council, oh, okay, he's in favor and not looking to speak. Is that true?

Carter Higginbotham: That is correct.

Senator Bette R. Lasky, D. 13: Okay and Dennis Viola, not wishing to speak, in favor and not wishing to speak; Paul Bernard, in favor and not wishing to speak. Bernard, sorry and Barry Conway, also in favor and not wishing to speak. Okay. Thank you, thank you all for being here. Is there anyone else that would like to speak to Senate Bill 508? If not, I will close the hearing.

Hearing concluded 8:42 am

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Cummings
Senate Committee Secretary
March 15, 2010

3 Attachments



Attachment #1

State Veterans Council

Mary E. Morin, Director

Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 508

An act establishing the state office of veteran's services

March 8, 2010

Election Law and Veterans Affairs Committee

Good afternoon Honorable Chairman and Committee Members. For the record, my name is Mary Morin and I am the Director of the State Veterans Council. I would like to start by providing you with a quote as follows:

"For those of you who do not know what the State Veterans Council is, I will tell you that each state has their own 'state department/office/ division of veteran's affairs/services. That is exactly what we are and do for the state of New Hampshire.'"

Each briefing or event that we attend across the state starts with an introduction such as this. Each phone call that confuses us with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Manchester, Concord, Rochester, Dover, or Portsmouth (and more) Veterans' Councils begins with a statement such as this. Each meeting with a veteran or their family member begins with a statement such as this. Each clarification between our agency and the State Veterans Advisory Committee begins with a statement such as this. Each testimony made before Senate and House legislative committees begins with a statement such as this. I've made the paragraph purposely sound redundant because it is as redundant as the justification statement above.

It is with that and several other factors in mind that our agency made a request of Senator Barnes to sponsor this legislation. As a result, I am here to speak briefly, and strongly, in favor of, and provide written testimony to, Senate Bill 508.

As mentioned, we make this request for an agency name change to prevent confusion and to provide an agency name that will better clarify and communicate that we exist as a state agency. This agency has evolved tremendously since the State Veterans Council inception in 1943 with RSA 115:1. What started as a 3 member unreimbursed council of veterans who oversaw a Director to perform the duties as listed in RSA 115:4. (Both statutes are provided as attachments) has currently expanded to perform duties in support of over 130,000 veterans located in the state of New Hampshire. The council is currently required to meet on a semi-annual basis to discuss the adequacy and delivery of service programs to veterans and their families.

We request no change in the actual 3-member council, agency duties, or re-alignment of reporting. It is simply our request to differentiate between the council, agency and, other service organizations across the state. We feel this is the best, and virtually cost free, solution. Additionally, we chose the name "Office of Veterans

Services" for the simple reason that we saw no need to establish a "department", "division", "bureau", or any other title which would require changes in leadership designations. (e.g "commissioner", "chair", or some other such nomenclature.)


We feel strongly that the name change provision will bring the agency more in line with other states. Noted in the state department listing attached, most other states have distinguishing designations that are readily discernable by veterans, service organizations, and legislative bodies as state entities and what the function of that entity is.

Because we work hand in hand with federal legislators, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (including the Board and Court of Veterans Appeals), and other state institutions, we feel this name change would be of greater benefit to veterans by providing less confusion regarding our mission and more of an impact to provision of assistance.

As final note, I would add we have investigated the cost of this proposal. We received a quote from the Office of Information Technology for a change of the website template. This quote amounted to \$250.00. Other than letterhead and business cards, which can be changed at no cost, it appears there is no other fiscal appropriation necessary to bring this to fruition.

As always, I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Morin".

Mary Morin
Director



Reserve Officers Association
Department of New Hampshire

March 5, 2010

Senate Election Law & Veterans' Affairs Committee
State House Room 120
Concord, NH 03301

Letter of Testimony on Senate Bill 508: Establishing a state Office of Veterans Services.

Madame Chair and distinguished committee members - I am not able to present testimony in person today and therefore request this letter be entered into the committee session record on behalf of the members of the Reserve Officers Association of New Hampshire in support of SB508 to establish a state office of veterans services.

It is our belief that this legislation is intended to essentially rename the executive portion of the State Veterans Council to a more conventional moniker which is more reflective of the actual functions of the office. In addition, it would hopefully remove any potential confusion between the State Veterans Council (a.k.a SVC) and the legislative advisory body known as the State Veterans Advisory Committee (a.k.a. SVAC).

In establishing the office this way, it more accurately conveys the mission of the Director and Veteran Resource Officers to serve the New Hampshire veteran community while still maintaining the oversight of the State Veterans Council as established under RSA 115:1. This proposed title also is more congruent with other states, such as Massachusetts, Texas, Arizona, etc. where the same veteran service offices are named "Department of Veterans Services".

Since the proposed legislation doesn't change the original charter of the office established under the original RSA, the overall function of the Office of Veterans Services will not vary from it's original purpose. As such, we support this initiative and respectfully request this bill be passed.

Sincerely,

David J. Kenney
CDR, USN
President

STATE DEPARTMENTS LISTED:

1. Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
2. Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
3. Office of Veterans Affairs, American Samoa Government
4. Arizona Department of Veterans Services
5. Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs
6. California Department of Veterans Affairs
7. Colorado Division of Veterans Services
8. Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs
9. Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs
10. Florida Department of Veterans Affairs
11. Georgia Department of Veterans Services
12. Department of Military Affairs, Guam
13. Hawaii Office of Veterans Services
14. Idaho Division of Military Services
15. Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs
16. Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs
17. Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
18. Kansas Veterans Commission
19. Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs
20. Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs
21. Bureau of Maine Veterans Services
22. Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
23. Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services
24. Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
25. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
26. Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board
27. Missouri Veterans Commission
28. Montana Veterans Affairs Division
29. Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs
30. Nevada Office of Veterans Services
31. New Hampshire State Veterans Council
32. New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
33. New Mexico Department of Veterans Services
34. New York State Division of Veterans Affairs
35. North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs
36. North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
37. Division of Veterans Affairs, Northern Mariana Islands
38. Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs, Ohio
39. Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs
40. Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs
41. Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
42. Public Advocate for Veterans Affairs, Puerto Rico
43. Rhode Island Division of Veteran Affairs
44. South Carolina Office of Veterans Affairs

45. South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs
46. Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs
47. Texas Veterans Commission
48. Utah Department of Veterans Affairs
49. Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs
50. Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs
51. Office of Veterans Affairs, Virgin Islands
52. Washington Department of Veterans Affairs
53. West Virginia Division of Veterans Affairs
54. Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
55. Wyoming Veterans Commission
56. Office of Veterans Affairs, District of Columbia

BREAKDOWN:

TOTAL

1. Department of Veterans Affairs (22) / Services (4)	26
2. Office of Veterans Affairs (5) / Services (2)	7
3. Division of Veterans Affairs (5) / Services (2)	7
4. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	4
5. Veterans Commission	4
6. Division of Military Services	1
7. Bureau of Veterans Services	1
8. State Veterans Affairs Board	1
9. State Veterans Council	1
10. Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs	1
11. Public Advocate for Veterans Affairs	1
12. Commission of Veterans Affairs	1
13. Division of Military Services	1

DEFINED: (Webster's II Dictionary, Third Edition, 2005)

1. Department - A specialized division of a large organization as a government, business, or college.
2. Office - A subdivision of government; a place in which business or professional activities are conducted.
3. Division - A group or section into which something is divided.
4. Commission - A group authorized to carry out certain functions or tasks.
5. Bureau - A government department; an agency or business performing a specific service.
6. Council - A group of people called together for consultation and discussion; an official legislative or administrative body.

TITLE I

THE STATE AND ITS GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 21-G

ORGANIZATION OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Section 21-G:5

21-G:5 Definitions. – In this chapter, the following words shall have the following meanings:

I. "Administratively attached agency" means an independent agency linked to a department for purposes of reporting and sharing support services.

II. "Advisory committee" means a committee established pursuant to RSA 21-G:11 which shall furnish advice, gather information, make recommendations and perform such other activities as may be instructed or as may be necessary to fulfill advisory functions or to comply with federal funding requirements, but which shall not administer a program or function or set policy.

III. "Agency" means any department, commission, board, institution, bureau, office, or other entity, by whatever name called, other than the legislative and judicial branches of state government, established in the state constitution, statutes, session laws or executive orders.

IV. "Bureau" means the principal unit within a division, which is directly responsible to the division level and is concerned with individual program management.

V. "Commissioner" means the individual in charge of the operations of a department, who is directly responsible to the governor.

VI. "Department" means the principal administrative unit within the executive branch of state government, which is concerned with broad functional responsibilities.

VII. "Division" means the principal unit within a department, which is directly responsible to the department level and is concerned with related major functional programs and activities.

VIII. "Field operations" means district or area offices which may combine division, bureau and section functions.

IX. "Section" means the principal unit of a bureau, which is directly responsible to the bureau level and is concerned with direct provision of services to the public or other state agencies.

X. "Subsection" means the principal unit of a section which is directly responsible to the section level and is concerned with direct provision of services to the public or other state agencies.

Source. 1983, 372:1, eff. July 1, 1983.

TITLE VIII PUBLIC DEFENSE AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAPTER 115 STATE VETERANS COUNCIL

Section 115:1

115:1 Council Established. –

I. There shall be a state veterans council of 3 members to be appointed by the governor and council, each of whom shall be veterans of any war in which the United States has been engaged and a citizen of the state. Of the first appointments under this section one shall be appointed for a term of 3 years, one for a term of 2 years, one for a term of one year and thereafter each shall be appointed for a term of 3 years. Each member of the council shall hold office until a successor is appointed and qualified. Any vacancy in the council shall be filled by the governor and council for the unexpired term.

II. The members of the council shall meet not less than semi-annually to review activities of the state veterans council and provide guidance to the director of the state veterans council on the adequacy and delivery of council programs. The council may designate one of its members to serve as liaison to the state veterans advisory committee.

Source. 1943, 190:1, par. 1. RSA 115:1. 1994, 41:1, eff. June 27, 1994.

TITLE VIII PUBLIC DEFENSE AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAPTER 115 STATE VETERANS COUNCIL

Section 115:4

115:4 Director of Veterans Council. –

I. The council shall, with the approval of the governor and council, appoint a director of the state veterans council, who shall be an honorably separated veteran of a war in which the United States was engaged. The director shall serve during the pleasure of the council and shall perform the duties listed in paragraph II.

II. The director of the council shall:

(a) Supervise the activities of a statewide service delivery structure which assists veterans and family members in identifying eligibility for veterans' benefits, filing claims, coordinating benefits with other state and federal agencies, and reviewing claims decisions for appeals or waivers of unfavorable decisions.

(b) Identify and develop legislative proposals to improve delivery of services, review and monitor legislation introduced by others, testify at hearings and prepare legislative fiscal note work sheets. The director shall coordinate, implement, and administer programs mandated by the legislature.

(c) Prepare the agency budget and administer and monitor expenditures for the council.

(d) Develop, interact and coordinate agency programs in conjunction with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other federal, state, local, and private organizations.

(e) Represent the council at various state and national conventions, conferences and public functions and provide supervision to the agency's public relations program.

(f) Perform such other duties as the council shall determine.

Source. 1943, 190:1, par. 8. RSA 115:4. 1969, 229:1. 1994, 41:2, eff. June 27, 1994.

TITLE VIII PUBLIC DEFENSE AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAPTER 115 STATE VETERANS COUNCIL

Section 115:6

115:6 Duties. –

I. The state veterans council shall assist veterans who are residents of this state or their dependents to secure all benefits or preferences to which they may be entitled under any state or federal laws or regulations. The council shall employ such assistance as may be necessary, within the limits of the appropriation made therefor, subject to the rules of the state division of personnel.

II. (a) Biennially beginning July 1, 2009, the state veterans council shall publish a state veterans handbook. The state veterans handbook shall include the following information:

(1) Points of contact for all federal, state, local, and nonprofit veterans agencies, departments, councils, hospitals, clinics, and other organizations offering services, benefits, and programs to New Hampshire veterans, including addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

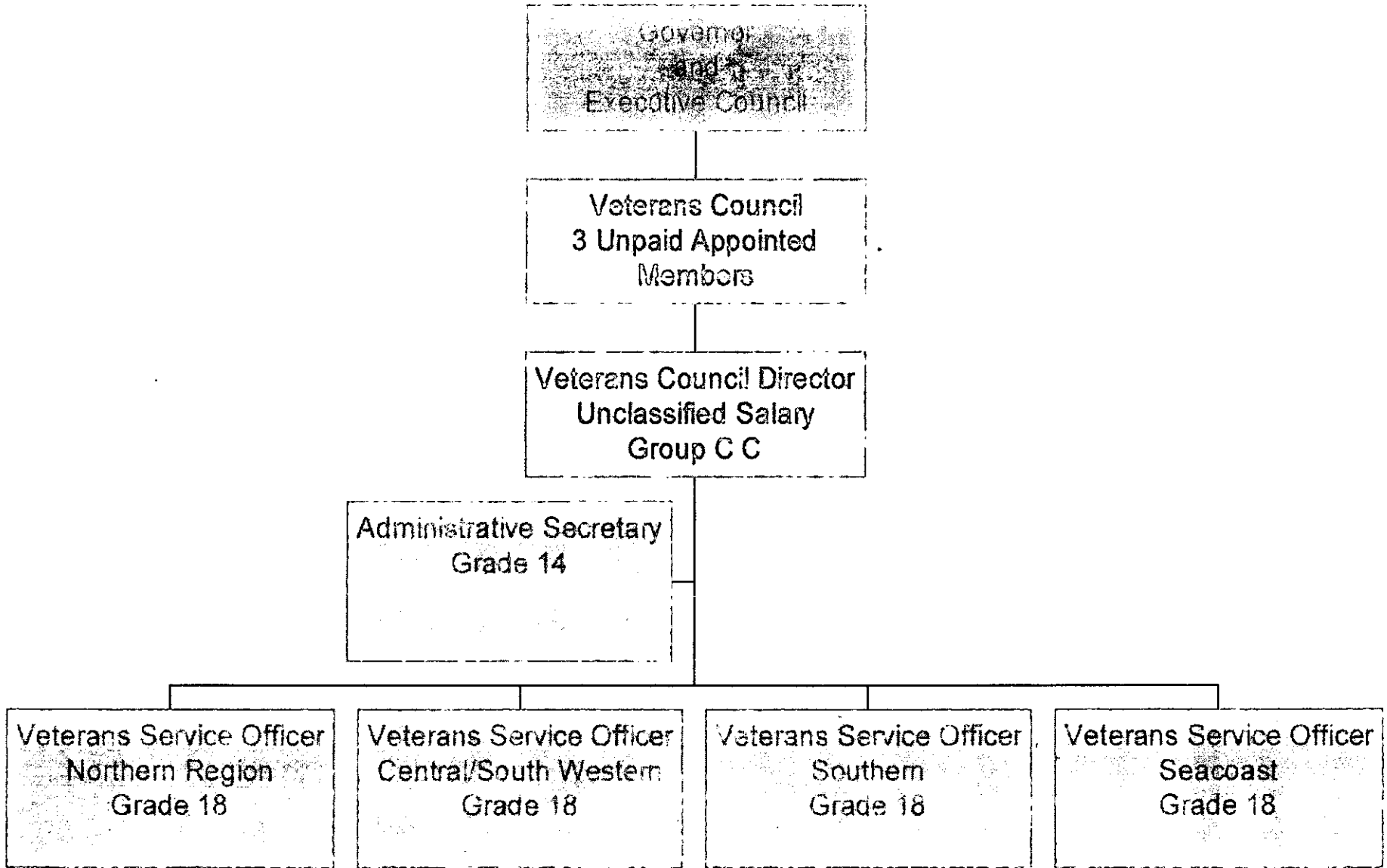
(2) A description of the services, benefits, and programs offered by each entity listed under subparagraph (a)(1).

(b) The state veterans council shall distribute the state veterans handbook through the state, local, and nonprofit entities listed under subparagraph (a)(1).

(c) The state veterans council may accept and expend for purposes of publishing and distributing the state veterans handbook, any donations, grants, bequests, and contributions which become available for such purposes.

Source. 1943, 190:1, par. 4. 1950, 9:2. RSA 115:6. 1994, 41:3, eff. June 27, 1994. 2008, 50:1, eff. July 1, 2008.

Veterans Council Organizational Chart



Speakers

Voting Sheets

Senate Election Law & Veterans' Affairs Committee

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Bill # SB 508

Hearing date: 3/8/10

Executive session date: 3/8/10

Motion of: OTP

VOTE: 4-0

Made by Lasky
Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

Seconded Lasky
by Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

Reported Lasky
by Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

Motion of: _____

VOTE: _____

Made by Lasky
Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

Seconded Lasky
by Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

Reported Lasky
by Senator: Houde
 Merrill
 Carson
 Barnes

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Reported out by</u>
Senator Lasky, Chairman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Houde, Vice-Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Merrill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Carson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Barnes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Amendments: _____

Notes: _____

Committee Report

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SENATE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Date: March 8, 2010

THE COMMITTEE ON Election Law and Veterans' Affairs
to which was referred Senate Bill 508

AN ACT establishing the state office of veterans services.

Having considered the same, the committee recommends that the Bill:

OUGHT TO PASS

BY A VOTE OF: 4-0

AMENDMENT # s

Senator John S. Barnes, Jr.
For the Committee

Kathy Cummings 271-3207

New Hampshire General Court - Bill Status System

Docket of SB508

Docket Abbreviations

Bill Title: establishing the state office of veterans services.*Official Docket of SB508:*

Date	Body	Description
02/17/2010	S	Introduced and Referred to Election Law and Veterans' Affairs; SJ 7 , Pg.92
03/03/2010	S	Hearing: March 8, 2010, Room 101, LOB, 8:30 a.m.; SC10
03/09/2010	S	Committee Report: Ought to Pass 3/17/10; SC11
03/17/2010	S	Ought to Pass, MA, VV; OT3rdg; SJ 10 , Pg.163
03/17/2010	S	Passed by Third Reading Resolution; SJ 10 , Pg.169
03/18/2010	H	Introduced and Referred to State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs; HJ 27 , PG.1441
03/23/2010	H	Public Hearing: 4/1/2010 11:30 AM LOB 203
03/31/2010	H	Executive Session: 4/8/2010 1:15 PM LOB 203
04/13/2010	H	Committee Report: Ought to Pass for April 21 (Vote 14-0; CC); HC 31 , PG.1529-1530
04/21/2010	H	Ought to Pass: MA VV; HJ 35 , PG.1661-1662
05/05/2010	H	Enrolled; HJ 38 , PG.1914
05/05/2010	S	Enrolled; SJ 17 , Pg.410
06/01/2010	S	Signed by the Governor on 06/1/2010; Effective 07/31/2010; Chapter 0119

NH House

NH Senate

Contact Us

New Hampshire General Court Information Systems
 107 North Main Street - State House Room 31, Concord NH 03301

Other Referrals

COMMITTEE REPORT FILE INVENTORY

SB508 ORIGINAL REFERRAL

RE-REFERRAL

1. THIS INVENTORY IS TO BE SIGNED AND DATED BY THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND PLACED INSIDE THE FOLDER AS THE FIRST ITEM IN THE COMMITTEE FILE.
2. PLACE ALL DOCUMENTS IN THE FOLDER FOLLOWING THE INVENTORY IN THE ORDER LISTED.
3. THE DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE AN "X" BESIDE THEM ARE CONFIRMED AS BEING IN THE FOLDER.
4. THE COMPLETED FILE IS THEN DELIVERED TO THE CALENDAR CLERK.

DOCKET (Submit only the latest docket found in Bill Status)

COMMITTEE REPORT

CALENDAR NOTICE on which you have taken attendance

HEARING REPORT (written summary of hearing testimony)

HEARING TRANSCRIPT (verbatim transcript of hearing)

List attachments (testimony and submissions which are part of the transcript) by number [1 thru 4 or 1, 2, 3, 4] here: 1, 2, 3

SIGN-UP SHEET

ALL AMENDMENTS (passed or not) CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE:

___ - AMENDMENT # ___ ___ - AMENDMENT # ___
___ - AMENDMENT # ___ ___ - AMENDMENT # ___

ALL AVAILABLE VERSIONS OF THE BILL:

AS INTRODUCED ___ AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE
 FINAL VERSION ___ AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

PREPARED TESTIMONY AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS (Which are not part of the transcript)

List by letter [a thru g or a, b, c, d] here: _____

EXECUTIVE SESSION REPORT

OTHER (Anything else deemed important but not listed above, such as amended fiscal notes):

IF YOU HAVE A RE-REFERRED BILL, YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE UP A DUPLICATE FILE FOLDER

DATE DELIVERED TO SENATE CLERK

8/19/10



COMMITTEE SECRETARY