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Senator Doug Facemire
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Delegate Dale Stephens
Delegate David Walker
Delegate Tom Azinger

The West Virginia Legislative Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs met each month during the 2011-2012 interim period beginning in June and ending in January 2012 to discuss and study topics relating to issues facing veterans, their families, and ways to enhance benefits available to them. At its meetings, the committee received testimony from the following individuals:

General Jim Hoyer, The Adjutant General, West Virginia National Guard

General Hoyer appeared before the committee to present information regarding the current status of the West Virginia National Guard and its various projects. General Hoyer also appeared often to provide updates and answer questions from the committee members.

Secretary Keith Gwinn, West Virginia Department of Veterans' Assistance

Secretary Gwinn appeared before the committee at nearly every meeting to provide updates and answer questions regarding the various projects within the newly minted Department of Veterans' Assistance.

Mr. Frank Vitale, Vet Connection

Mr. Vitale appeared before the committee to make presentation regarding the Vet Connection organization.

Mr. Toney Colagrosso, TRICARE

Mr. Colagrosso appeared before the committee several times to present information regarding TRICARE and the efforts to increase TRICARE acceptance at health care providers.

Dr. Gregory Aloia, President, Concord University

Dr. Aloia appeared before the committee and presented an update on the progress of the HEPC Veteran Friendly Taskforce and the veteran friendly campus initiative.

Ms. Lisa Dooley, Municipal League

Ms. Dooley appeared before the committee to present information on the Municipal League's efforts and plans in the Veteran Friendly Communities initiative.

Mr. Skip Gebheart, Veterans Coordinator, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Mr. Gebheart appeared before the committee and presented information regarding the Veteran Friendly Campus initiative and state and federal tuition programs for veterans.

Dr. Joseph Scotti, Professor, West Virginia University

Hilda Heady, Senior Vice President and Chair, Rural Health Research and Policy Group, Atlas Research

Dr. Scotti and Ms. Heady appeared jointly before the committee to present information regarding a proposed veteran study to identify emerging issues facing veterans and recently returned service members.

The committee took action on and recommended the introduction of the following legislation to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance:

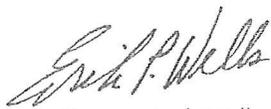
1. **HB/SB *****- Providing veterans' death certificates to families and funeral directors at no cost;
2. **HB/SB *****- Relating to unemployment benefits for certain spouses of military personnel;
3. **HB/SB*****-Relating to consideration of military education, training and experience for qualification for professional licensure; extension and waiver of certain requirements for professional licenses of persons and accompanying spouses on active military duty; and
4. **HCR/SCR ****- Requesting the Joint Committee on Government and Finance to continue studying the needs, challenges, and issues facing West Virginia military veterans.

The committee also submitted letters on behalf of its members as follows:

To Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, Senate Finance Chairman Roman Prezioso, and House Finance Chairman Harry Keith White to support and endorse the full and adequate funding for the West Virginia Center for Veterans Education and Training Success in the FY 2012 Budget Proposal; and

To the Joint Committee on Government and Finance requesting the approval of funding for a study to identify emerging issues facing veterans and recently returned service members.

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Erik Wells
Co-Chairman



Delegate Richard J. Iaquinta
Co-Chairman



Delegate Barbara Evans Fleischaer
Co-Chairwoman