

UPDATED
SESSION OF 2014

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE
BILL NO. 2681**

As Recommended by House Committee on
Veterans, Military and Homeland Security

Brief*

Sub. for HB 2681 would abolish the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs (KCVA), create the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office and the Kansas Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs, and make other changes relating to the transfer of powers, duties, and functions.

Under the provisions of the bill, the KCVA would be abolished and all powers, duties, and functions would be transferred to the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office effective July 1, 2014. The director would be appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Kansas Senate. Additionally, the director would be required to be a veteran. The bill also would require the director to appoint and oversee the superintendent of the Kansas Soldiers' Home and Kansas Veterans' Home subject to approval by the Governor.

Kansas Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs

The bill would create the Kansas Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs, which would assist the director in providing assistance and services to veterans, their relatives, and their dependents. The advisory committee would consist of five members, all appointed by the Governor; these members would be required to have served in the U.S. Armed Forces

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

and received an honorable discharge. Additionally, the Governor would be required to designate a chairperson of the advisory committee. Those members currently serving on the KCVA would be permitted to continue their service for the term for which each member was appointed. The Governor would be required to appoint one member from each congressional district and one at-large member. Additional membership provisions would specify that no more than three members could be members of the same political party and no more than two members could represent the same veterans' organization. The appointees' terms would be four years.

Annual Reporting Requirement

The bill would amend current law and require the director of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office to annually prepare and submit a written report to both the House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security and the Office of the Governor. The first report is to be submitted on or before the first day of the 2015 Legislative Session. Under the provisions of the bill, the report would include the following:

- Progress made by the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office and its director in response to recommendations made by the Legislative Division of Post Audit in the preceding fiscal year;
- Information on the current financial procedures implemented by the KCVA at the Kansas Veterans' Home and the Kansas Soldiers' Home;
- Information on the current residential care services provided for veterans at both facilities; and
- Recommendations for any necessary legislation required to ensure the State of Kansas is providing

the necessary services and care for Kansas veterans.

Veterans' Funds

The bill would eliminate a requirement that any member's (veteran) funds in excess of \$5,000 be deposited with the Treasurer. Under current law, members are permitted to use those funds for their personal use, benefit and burial; however, any amount in excess of \$5,000 is deposited with the State Treasurer for safekeeping. Additionally, the bill would require the director of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office to designate an individual at both the Kansas Soldiers' Home and the Kansas Veterans' Home to oversee the funds.

Background

HB 2681, as introduced, would have abolished the KCVA and transferred all its powers, duties, and functions to the Kansas Executive Director of Veterans Affairs, which would be created within the Office of the Governor. The original bill also required the executive director to be appointed by the Governor; additionally, the bill would have created the Kansas Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs. The House Committee amended and inserted the contents of HB 2624 and HB 2581 into HB 2681. The House Committee then adopted a substitute bill which incorporated the provisions of HB 2624, HB 2581, and HB 2681.

The sections in the bill dealing with the elimination of the KCVA and the appointment of the executive director were contained in HB 2681. The House Committee heard testimony in support of the bill from a representative of the Military Officers Association of America. Testimony in opposition to the bill was provided by a representative of the Kansas American Legion. The Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs provided written testimony in opposition to the bill.

The annual reporting requirement was originally contained in HB 2581. The House Committee heard testimony in support of the bill from a representative of the Kansas American Legion. Additionally, the KCVA also testified in support of HB 2581.

The section of the bill dealing with member funds was originally contained in HB 2624. Testimony in support of the bill was provided by a representative from the Kansas American Legion. Written testimony in support of the bill was provided by the KCVA.

The fiscal notes, as prepared by the Division of the Budget on HB 2624 and HB 2581, indicated neither bill would have a fiscal impact. The fiscal impact of HB 2681, as introduced, was not able to be determined due to the complexity of the bill. A fiscal note on the substitute bill is not available.