

HJR 15 -- PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR DISABLED PRISONERS OF WAR

SPONSOR: Chappelle-Nadal

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Ways and Means by a vote of 7 to 1.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment exempts from property taxation all real property used as a homestead by a former prisoner of war who has a total service-connected disability.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012. Estimated Cost on Other State Funds of \$0 in FY 2010, \$0 in FY 2011, and \$0 or \$934 in FY 2012.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill offers a homestead exemption for between 200 to 250 former prisoners of war (POWs) with disabilities. These veterans deserve special recognition. The advancing age of the disabled POW World War II veterans requires the immediate support and passage of the bill. Missouri can show its appreciation for the sacrifices made by these men. The rising costs of living make the bill a great help financially for the veterans. Increased property taxes have hurt the elderly including the qualified POWs. Time will reduce the costs of the bill as many of the qualified POWs are dying each year. The estimated cost is about \$200,000 for the first few years and then less than \$100,000 thereafter. The bill will help veterans stay in their homes instead of selling them because of tax costs or moving to state veteran homes which are already stressed financially. Several states have provided relief for some military including Oklahoma, Nebraska, Tennessee, Illinois, Alabama, and Arkansas.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Chappelle-Nadal; Dewey Riehn, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Missouri Department; John Clark and Ed Slater, American Ex-Prisoners of War; and Scott Orr.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.