

HCS HB 1893 -- GAMING FUNDS

SPONSOR: Day (Kelly)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Veterans by a vote of 8 to 1.

Currently, the laws regarding the distribution of gaming funds contain provisions that govern the administration of early childhood education and veterans' programs which are supported by gaming moneys. This substitute repeals and re-enacts those provisions with two changes and places them in the statutes that apply to veterans (Chapter 42, RSMo) and to education (Chapter 161). The changes include requiring grant funds to be made available for service officer training for outreach programs between veteran service organizations and the Missouri Veterans Commission and adds the Vietnam War to the list of conflicts for which service medals are awarded. An obsolete subsection that describes how distributions were made in Fiscal Year 1998 and earlier is also repealed.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2011, veterans' programs will receive an additional \$500,000 per year if the Gaming Commission Fund reaches the 2009 appropriation level for early childhood education. Once the \$500,000 is distributed to the Veterans' Commission Capital Improvement Trust Fund, additional funds will be deposited into the Early Childhood Development Education and Care Fund.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill makes more money available for veteran service officers. Many veterans don't know what services and benefits are available to them. By having more service officers, they will be able to seek out veterans and help them receive the assistance to which they are entitled. This will help expand veteran programs and bring more federal dollars into the state.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Kelly; Missouri Veterans Commission; Dewey Rhein, Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Missouri Department; Lynn Dorrall, American Legion, Department of Missouri; and Pat Roe Kerr.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it is important to maintain early childhood programs at their current funding levels. By implementing the provisions of the bill, the funding levels for early childhood programs will be detrimentally

affected by allowing the Missouri Veterans Commission to receive \$500,000 upon reaching the 2009 appropriation level.

Testifying against the bill was Jerry Lafaver, Partnership for Children.