

HJR 2 -- VETERANS HOME BOND FUND

SPONSOR: Shumake

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 10 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 13 to 0.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment authorizes the issuance of up to \$63 million in bonds to be used solely for the construction of Missouri veterans' homes under the direction of the Missouri Veterans Commission. The bonds must be issued by the State Board of Fund Commissioners over time and in the amounts as determined by the General Assembly. The bonds must be retired serially and by installments within 15 years from their issue date. The proceeds from the sale of the bonds must be deposited into the newly created Veterans Home Bond and Interest Fund and expended for authorized purposes only.

This bill is similar to HJR 54 (2016) and HJR 44 (2015).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there is a great need for a new veterans' home in Missouri. The need for skilled nursing care for our veterans is on the rise. At this time there are a total of 1300 beds in our homes with 1900 to 2000 eligible veterans on the waiting list. The legislation would allow the Veteran's Commission to build a new home in a new location or to replace an older existing home.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Shumake and Pat Rowe Kerr.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill discussed how the federal government calculates the need for veterans home beds for each state and the cost of building a new home. Other options for providing care for veterans were presented to the committee.

Testifying on the bill were Larry Kay, Missouri Veterans Commission and Missouri Health Care Association.