



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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MEDAL FOR DESERT STORM

Senate Bill 352 with House committee
amendment
First Analysis (2-20-92)

Sponsor: Senator John F. Kelly
Senate Committee: State Affairs and
Military/Veteran Affairs
House Committee: Military and
Veterans' Affairs

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The citizen-soldier throughout history has played a vital part in the defense of his or her country, values, family, and way of life. The role of the militia is well documented in books, papers, and articles about military conflicts, and most Americans are taught about the sacrifices of this country's early citizen-soldiers, the Minutemen, in the American Revolution. Recently, the citizen-soldier was called upon once more to serve the United States and its allies -- this time in the Persian Gulf. It has been proposed that, in recognition of the sacrifices made by those who served in the Persian Gulf conflict, a citizen-soldier award be established, and a committee be formed to identify, and present the award to, eligible recipients.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would create the "Citizen Soldier Award Act" to establish the Order of Citizen Soldier Award Committee in the Department of Military Affairs, and require the committee to:

-- Establish an award consisting of a medal, designed by the committee or by a designee of the committee, that would be known as the Citizen Soldier Award.

-- Identify each resident of this state who, as a member of the armed forces, served honorably during the Persian Gulf region military conflict designated by the president of the United States as Operation Desert Shield, or Operation Desert Storm, during the period between August 2, 1990, and the date the president declared that the United States military involvement in that region was terminated. "Armed forces" would mean the army, air force, navy, marine corps, coast guard, or other

military forces of the United States, including the auxiliary branches of those forces.

-- Present the citizen soldier award to each resident identified as having served honorably in the armed forces in the Persian Gulf or to a representative of a deceased resident. The award would be presented in a ceremony or ceremonies approved by the committee.

The committee, which would be appointed by the governor, would be composed of five representatives from the Michigan National Guard and reserve armed forces plus one public representative. The committee would meet at the call of the chairperson, who also would be appointed by the governor.

A vacancy on the committee would be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, and the governor could remove a member from the committee in accordance with provisions of the state constitution of 1963 that pertain to the removal or suspension of public officers. Each appointed member of the committee would serve without compensation, but could be reimbursed for all necessary travel and other expenses in performing committee duties. The committee would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

The bill provides that the committee would dissolve within three years of the effective date of the bill.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee amended the bill to require that the

Senate Bill 352 (2-20-92)

Order of Citizen Soldier Award Committee establish an award only for those residents of the state who "served honorably" in the armed forces during the Persian Gulf region military conflict.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the costs to the state for travel and other expenses for the six-member committee cannot be estimated since this cost would depend on the number of meetings held and the amount of expenses incurred by committee members for each meeting. The bill also would require the awarding of a medal for each member of the armed forces involved in the Persian Gulf conflict. According to preliminary estimates of the Michigan National Guard, approximately 33,000 Michigan residents in all branches of the armed forces, the National Guard, and the reserves, were activated for Desert Storm. Therefore, the actual cost would depend on the total number of eligible occupants and the actual cost of the medal. For example, providing a \$1 medal would cost \$33,000; and providing a \$10 medal would cost \$330,000. (2-19-92) The House committee amendment would appear to slightly reduce the number of eligible applicants.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

All of the National Guard and armed forces reservists and active duty personnel who served honorably in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm had their careers and family lives disrupted, and some paid the ultimate price of any military conflict: they lost their lives. The bill would enable Michigan and its citizens to demonstrate their pride in and appreciation of the men and women who served in the Persian Gulf and sacrificed so much for their country.

POSITIONS:

The American Legion supports the bill. (2-19-92)

The AMVETS (American Veterans of World War 11, Korea, and Vietnam) supports the bill. (2-19-92)