



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 90 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator David Knezek
Committee: Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security

Date Completed: 2-10-17

RATIONALE

Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. is an organization of mothers and female guardians of individuals who are serving in the military or who are veterans. The organization was founded in Flint, Michigan, in 1942. Blue Star Mothers does many things to support troops serving overseas and their families at home. It has been suggested that Michigan designate February 1 of each year as a day to recognize and honor the sacrifice and efforts of members of Blue Star Mothers.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new statute to declare February 1 of each year as "Blue Star Mothers Day", in recognition of the contributions that Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. has made to Michigan and the nation.

The bill includes a legislative finding that, "Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. is a national organization of mothers whose sons and daughters serve honorably in the nation's armed forces" and was founded in Flint in 1942. The bill states that the organization's purposes and activities include all of the following:

- "Perpetuating the memory of the men and women who have served our country as members of the armed forces."
- "Welcoming home returning veterans."
- "Visiting wounded veterans in hospitals and rehabilitation centers."
- "Assisting in veterans' ceremonies."
- "Attending patriotic rallies and meetings."
- "Maintaining true allegiance to the government of the United States."
- "Upholding the American institutions of freedom, justice, and equal rights."
- "Caring for the unsupported mothers who gave their sons and daughters to the service of the nation."
- "Providing moral support for members."

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

According to the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. website, the organization traces its roots to a meeting of 300 mothers of military service members who gathered at the Durant Hotel in Flint, Michigan, on February 1, 1942. On February 6 of that year, the organization was reported in the Congressional Record and chapters then began to form in several states. Congress granted Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. a national charter in June 1960. The "blue star" on which the organization's name is based is a reference to the Service Flag, an official banner authorized by the U.S. Department of Defense for display by families of people serving in the U.S. Armed Forces

during any period of war or hostilities. Also known as the "Blue Star Flag", the Service Flag was designed and gained popularity during World War I and the practice of displaying the flag became more widespread during World War II. The flag features a blue star on a white background, with a red border. Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization. It consists of mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers, and female legal guardians who have children serving in the military or children who are veterans. According to the website, the organization supports active duty service personnel, promotes patriotism, assists veterans organizations, and is available to assist in homeland volunteer efforts. Among other efforts, Blue Star Mothers provides care packages to military members serving overseas and provides assistance to families that encounter hardships as a result of a loved one's service in war.

Given the Michigan heritage of the organization, and its efforts to support military troops and their families at home, the State should designate the anniversary of the group's founding in Flint as Blue Star Mothers Day.

Supporting Argument

Enduring the challenge of having a child serve in the military during a time of war or hostilities may be more emotionally difficult than to actually perform that military service. Service members are inspired and comforted by the love and support of a mother both during their service abroad and when they return home. The Blue Star Mothers organization harnesses that love and support for the benefit of all service members, veterans, and military families. Most people, however, are probably unaware of the organization and its efforts. Some people who are Blue Star mothers by virtue of their children's military service might not even know about Blue Star Mothers of America. Honoring the organization and its membership by designating "Blue Star Mothers Day" would help to promote the group and educate the public about its many good deeds.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.