



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 670 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Rebekah Warren
Committee: Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security

Date Completed: 6-17-16

RATIONALE

The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. As the centennial of that event approaches, many public and private entities will be honoring America's participation in the war effort. The Federal government and several states have formed centennial commissions to commemorate World War I and educate schoolchildren and the public at large about the significance of the war and America's role in it. It has been suggested that a commission also be established in Michigan to plan and coordinate activities throughout the State to mark the centennial of World War I.

CONTENT

The bill would create the "World War I Centennial Commission Act" to do the following:

- Create the World War I Centennial Commission, and provide for its membership and procedures.**
- Require the Commission to plan programs and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I.**
- Require the Commission to encourage private organizations and State and local governments to organize and participate in the activities.**
- Require the Commission to report to certain State officials on its recommendations.**
- Require the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist the Commission.**

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

WWI Centennial Commission

The World War I Centennial Commission would be created within the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA). The Commission would consist of the DMVA Director and 13 members, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The initial members would have to be appointed within 90 days after the Act's effective date. The Governor could remove a member for incompetence; dereliction of duty; malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office; or any other good cause.

The Commission's first meeting would have to be called by the DMVA Director. At that meeting, the Commission would have to elect a chairperson and other officers it considered necessary or appropriate. The Commission then would have to meet at least quarterly, or more frequently at the call of the chairperson or if requested by seven or more members.

The Commission would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Members of the Commission would serve without compensation, but could be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

Commission Duties & Responsibilities

The Commission would have to do all of the following:

- Plan, develop, and execute programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I.
- Encourage private organizations and State and local governments to organize and participate in activities organized by the Commission.
- Facilitate and coordinate World War I centennial activities throughout the State.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about World War I centennial events and plans.
- Develop recommendations on ways to commemorate the centennial of World War I in Michigan and provide a report on those recommendations to the DMVA Director, Governor, and Legislature.

The DMVA would have to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties under the proposed Act.

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

World War I is sometimes referred to as America's "forgotten war", even though more Americans died during that war than during the Korean and Vietnam wars combined. More than 4.3 million American troops, including more than 135,000 from Michigan, were mobilized in World War I; and more than 116,000 Americans, including about 14,000 from Michigan, lost their lives in the war. The involvement of the United States in securing victory in World War I elevated the country's position among the world's military and economic powers, and profoundly shaped the course of the remainder of the 20th century, which is sometimes referred to as "the American century".

The events surrounding World War I should be commemorated upon the centennial of that war, and the State should facilitate efforts to educate Michigan residents about the war and its significance. The Federal government and several states already have established centennial commissions for this purpose. According to the website for the United States World War One Centennial Commission, "The Commission will use the Centennial as a timely and essential opportunity to **educate** the country's citizens about the causes, courses and consequences of the war; to **honor** the heroism and sacrifice of those Americans who served; and to **commemorate** through public programs and initiatives the centennial of this global event." (Emphasis in original.) Michigan should establish its own centennial commission to work with the U.S. centennial commission to commemorate the State's and nation's history and educate today's youths about World War I and Michigan's participation in the war.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on State government. It would permit expense reimbursement for members of the proposed Commission and would require the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties. The bill, however, proposes no appropriations to fund these provisions. Should the bill be enacted, it is likely that the cost to the Department would be minimal, depending upon how active the Commission became.

The bill would have no fiscal impact on local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Bruce Baker

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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.