

HCS HB 1490 -- VETERANS BENEFITS

SPONSOR: Griffith

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 8 to 5. Voted "Do "Pass" by Rules-Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

In this bill, except as permitted under federal law, no person can receive compensation for advising or assisting any individual with regard to any veterans benefits matter.

If someone is advising or assisting any individual with regard to any veterans benefits, he or she cannot guarantee that any individual will receive specific veterans benefits or that any individual is guaranteed to receive a specific level, percentage, or amount of veterans benefits. The individual who is providing the advising services must provide the following disclaimer:

"This business is not sponsored by, or affiliated with, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the Missouri Veterans Commission, or any other federally chartered veterans service organization. Other organizations, including, but not limited to, the Missouri Veterans Commission, your local veterans service agency, and other federally chartered veterans service organizations, may be able to provide you with this service free of charge. Products or services offered by this business are not necessarily endorsed by any of these organizations. You may qualify for other veterans benefits beyond the benefits for which you are receiving services here."

This bill also prohibits any person from receiving compensation for referring any individual to another person to advise or assist the individual with veterans benefits.

Any person who violates the provisions of this bill can be found guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

This bill further adds multiple provisions relating to veterans. Please see the Summary Sheet for a detailed list of the additional language added in the House Committee Substitute version of the House bill.

The bill contains provisions from HB 70, HB 116, HB 190, HB 483, HCS HB 496 (2024).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that we need to protect our vulnerable veterans. These companies have predatory practices and do not act in the best interests of the veterans.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Griffith; Troy Williams, MAVO VFW.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that these companies provide a needed service for veterans. Not all of the companies are bad actors. This bill would hurt companies who are trying to help veterans.

Testifying in person against the bill was William Taylor, Veterans Guardian.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.