



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #845

Post-Traumatic Stress Funding for Milwaukee Homeless (DVA -- Aids to Veterans and Veterans Organizations)

Bill Agency

[LFB 2007-09 Budget Summary: Page 584, #7]

CURRENT LAW

No provision.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$25,000 GPR annually for payments to the Center for Veterans Issues (Milwaukee) for providing outreach services to homeless veterans. Create an annual GPR appropriation in DVA for providing these grants. Specify that no funding could be expended from this appropriation after June 30, 2009.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Center for Veterans Issues is a non-profit organization that provides transitional housing, training and employment services, drug and alcohol counseling, community outreach and financial services to veterans in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.

2. The Center's purpose is to provide information, resources, leadership training, technical assistance, organizational development and volunteer services coordination to Veterans Services Organizations. The stated goal of the organization is "...to confront and address human afflictions affecting veterans, their families and the community through partnership with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations."

3. The bill specifies that \$25,000 GPR annually will be provided to the Center on a one-time basis for outreach services for homeless veterans during the 2007-09 biennium. The Department of Veterans Affairs further clarifies that the funding would be used to assist the Department's efforts in locating and referring veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Department indicates that the Center may be able to more effectively target inner-city homeless veterans due to the Center's homeless and transitional housing programs.

4. The Committee should note that the bill would also provide \$100,000 GPR annually to the Department for PTSD outreach services under the Veterans Assistance Program (VAP) [see Issue Paper #844]. It could be argued that funding for the Center for Veterans Issues would be duplicative of the funding that would be provided for PTSD assistance under VAP. As with assistance provided to the Department under the bill, funding for the Center for Veterans Issues would not provide medical assistance, but would be used to locate and refer veterans that potentially have PTSD to the USDVA medical facilities. Given these considerations, funding could be deleted.

5. Given that funding is already proposed for PTSD assistance under VAP, the Committee could choose to delete the \$25,000 GPR annually for the Center and instead specify that a portion of the money provided to the Department's GPR-supported veterans assistance program appropriation, under the bill, would be provided as one-time funding the Center for Veterans Issues. This alternative would result in all state funding for PTSD assistance to veterans being in one appropriation.

6. One-time funding is generally provided for seed money or costs of one-time projects. It could be argued that PTSD problems could be an ongoing issue among the homeless veterans in Milwaukee and that it is unlikely that funding need would decline in the subsequent biennium. If the Committee chooses to fund PTSD services through the Center for Veterans Issues, either as a separate appropriation or as part of VAP, funding could be made permanent rather than one-time.

7. Currently, the state support for the VAP is provided from veterans trust fund revenues. It could be argued that PTSD services should also be provided from the trust fund. As a result, the Committee could either provide increased SEG funding for PTSD services or direct that \$25,000 annually under the current SEG-funded VAP be used for these services.

8. If funding is provided, it could be argued, that additional oversight is needed to insure that PTSD outreach services were provided to veterans in Milwaukee. The Committee could require the Center of Veterans Issues to provide an annual report, by September 1, to the Department that details the programs that were supported by the funding, including the number of individuals referred to medical facilities for PTSD evaluation, the Center's efforts to develop permanent funding for PTSD veterans' services, and any other information DVA considers important in evaluating the success of the program.

ALTERNATIVES TO BILL

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide one-time funding to the Center for Veterans Issues, of \$25,000 GPR annually.

ALT 1	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
GPR	\$0	\$50,000

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation to provide one-time funding of \$25,000 annually to the Center for Veterans Issues, from the veterans trust fund (SEG) rather than the general fund (GPR).

ALT 2	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
GPR	-\$50,000	\$0
SEG	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
Total	\$0	\$50,000

3. Delete provision. Instead, specify that the Department provide \$25,000 GPR on a one-time basis in 2007-08 and 2008-09 from the Department's general fund-supported veterans assistance program appropriation for the Center for Veterans Issues for post-traumatic stress disorder outreach services. Delete separate appropriation for the Center of Veterans Issues.

ALT 3	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
GPR	-\$50,000	\$0

4. Delete provision. Instead, specify that the Department provide \$25,000 SEG on a one-time basis in 2007-08 and 2008-09 from the Department's veterans trust fund-supported veterans assistance program appropriation for the Center for Veterans Issues for post-traumatic stress disorder outreach services. Delete separate appropriation for the Center of Veterans Issues.

ALT 4	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
GPR	-\$50,000	\$0

5. In addition to any of the above alternatives, make funding for PTSD services provided through the Center for Veterans Issues permanent rather than one-time.

6. In addition to any of the above alternatives, require the Center for Veterans Issues to

provide an annual report, by September 1, that includes information on the number of veterans that were referred for potential post-traumatic stress disorder by the Center, the Center's efforts to obtain long-term funding for continuing assistance to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, and any other information required by the Department necessary to evaluate the success of the program.

7. Delete provision.

ALT 7	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
GPR	-\$50,000	\$0

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