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House Bill 5638 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Janet Kukuk
House Committee: Veterans Affairs
Senate Committee: Human Resources, Labor, Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs

Date Completed: 5-24-00

RATIONALE

On December 7, 1941, Japan conducted a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, killing and injuring thousands of American servicemen and servicewomen, and destroying a significant portion of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Named a "day of infamy" by then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the events of that day hastened the entry of the United States into World War II. Some people believe that the State should encourage citizens, communities, and governmental and educational entities to recognize the historical significance of that day by declaring December 7 as Pearl Harbor Day.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new act to designate December 7 each year as "Pearl Harbor Day", in commemoration of "this historic and tragic attack".

The bill specifies that the Legislature would encourage individuals, governmental and educational institutions, and community organizations to pause on December 7 and reflect upon the courage and sacrifice of those who died or were injured in the attack.

Further, the bill contains a statement of legislative recognition, as follows:

The legislature recognizes the enormous sacrifice made by the 2,335 servicemen and servicewomen who gave their lives in the defense of this nation during the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Another 1,143 servicemen and servicewomen were injured during the attack. The legislature further recognizes that the attack on Pearl Harbor changed the course of history by bringing the United States into the war with Japan and Germany.

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

While a significant event noted in the history books, the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor has no official recognition by the State. By declaring December 7 to be Pearl Harbor Day, the bill would honor the thousands of men and women killed in the attack and commemorate their sacrifices. Pearl Harbor Day could be used to educate the public, particularly young people, about the historical significance of the date, and would serve as a reminder that the country and its citizens must remain aware of the dangers of sudden aggression from hostile nations or groups. Reportedly, Michigan would be the first state in the nation to designate December 7 as Pearl Harbor Day.

Legislative Analyst: P. Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Fiscal Analyst: B. Bowerman

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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.