

CREATE A VETERANS' FACILITY OMBUDSMAN

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

Senate Bill 809 as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Sen. Peter MacGregor

House Committee: Appropriations

Senate Committee: Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

Complete to 6-06-16

SUMMARY:

This bill would create the Office of the Michigan Veterans' Facility Ombudsman within the Legislative Council. Currently, the Directors of Nursing for the State's two veterans homes act as the points of contact for filing complaints, per ongoing boilerplate language incorporated into appropriation bills.

The major responsibilities of the Veterans' Facility Ombudsman would be to investigate complaints filed by resident veterans, resident veterans' family members or legal guardians, or a legislator and report findings of any investigations, with recommendations, to the Legislative Council. The Veterans' Facility Ombudsman would have the authority to independently initiate an investigation at the state veterans homes; would have access to all information, records, and documents in possession of the facility being investigated; would be able to hold hearings and request that individuals appear before a hearing to give testimony; and would be able to interview individuals employed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs as well as those contracted through a private employer.

This bill would require the Veterans' Facility Ombudsman to issue a semiannual report to the Legislative Council, Board of Managers (Veterans Homes), and the Legislature, which would include:

- Number of complaints received
- Number of complaints by category (concerning an administrative act, a statute or rule, significant veterans health issues, and significant veterans safety issues)
- Number of complaints resulting in the initiation of an investigation
- Number of investigations initiated by the Veterans' Facility Ombudsman
- Number of hearings held
- Number of findings reports issued

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill would increase state costs for the operation of the Office of the Veterans' Facilities Ombudsman. The proposed FY 2016-17 Omnibus Appropriations Bill includes \$150,000 GF/GP in Article VIII for this purpose.

Fiscal Analyst: Kent Dell

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.