

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Representative Doug Mays at 1:35 p.m. on February 20, 2001 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative John Edmonds, Excused
Representative L. Candy Ruff, Excused

Committee staff present: Theresa M. Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Russell Mills, Legislative Research Department
Shelia Pearman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Representative Daniel Thimesch
Ken Strafer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans Affairs
Dr. Lea Steele, Epidemiologist, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs
Jim Bunker, Gulf War Veteran

Others attending: See attached list

Without objection resolution will be introduced as requested by Representative Wilson authorizing voters to enact and amend state laws. [HCR 5024]

Without objection resolution will be introduced as requested by Representative Wilson regarding authorizing voters to initiate constitutional amendments. [HCR 5025]

Without objection bill will be introduced as requested by Representative Benlon regarding surveyors not considered trespassing on land if purpose if for surveying. [HB 2539]

Chairman opened the hearing on **HR 6008**.

Representative Thimesch (Attachment #1) noted the 1997 Kansas Legislature funded a study by Dr. Steele which was published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. This study cost \$150,000 compared to \$150 million the federal government has spent on researching the "Gulf War syndrome" yielding less evidence of the syndrome. The study found the individuals with the highest rate of illness were the enlisted Army personnel stationed who left the Iraq/Kuwait regions between June-July 1991. He expressed his appreciation for Mr. Bunker to champion this legislation due to his personal experiences following the war. (Attachment #2)

Dr. Steele provided details of the study (Attachment #3) based on the 7,500 veterans now living in Kansas who served in Gulf War. A privately funded study is ongoing in Texas and California regarding microplasma.

Mr. Strafer expressed his willingness to communicate the strides Kansas has made toward addressing the Gulf War veterans to The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs appointed by President George W. Bush. He noted Governor Graves leadership and willingness to host a Kansas Legislative Commission including the neighboring states of Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Members of committee expressed personal or family experiences of serving in various wars and the need to provide this support for the veterans who did their job of serving their country very well.
Hearing on **HR 6008** was closed.

Representative Rehorn moved adoption of **HR 6008**. Representative Wilson second the motion.

Adjourned at 2:15. The next scheduled meeting is February 28, 2001.