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REVISE DEFINITION OF VIETNAM ERA

House Bill 4646 as enrolled
Public Act 131 of 1997
Second Analysis (1-8-97)

Sponsor: Rep. Bob Brown
House Committee: Senior Citizens and
Veterans Affairs
Senate Committee: Human Resources,
Labor and Veterans Affairs

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Up until recently both the federal law and Michigan law defined the Vietnam era as beginning August 5, 1964 and ending May 7, 1975. (These dates are important in determining eligibility for certain types of veterans' benefits.) However, on January 1, 1997, Section 505 of the federal Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 took effect, changing the date set as the beginning of the Vietnam era in federal law from August 5, 1964 to February 28, 1961. Given the change in the federal definition, it has been suggested that the state definition should be changed to coincide with the federal law.

veterans' benefits, it is important, for the sake of administrative simplicity, that the federal and state law should be consistent.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

In order to provide uniformity of service dates for veterans, Public Act 190 of 1965 sets the definitions, including dates and terms to be applied to all acts of the state that relate to veterans. House Bill 4646 would amend Public Act 190 of 1965 to change the definition of the Vietnam era. Currently, the act defines the Vietnam era as the period beginning August 5, 1964 and ending May 7, 1975; the bill would move the beginning date back to February 28, 1961.

MCL 35.61

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact. (1-8-98)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Given that the federal government has moved back the official date it sets for the beginning of the Vietnam era, it is only appropriate that the date in state law should be moved back as well. Since the starting date for the Vietnam era is used to determine eligibility for certain

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