

ENGROSSED SENATE
JOINT
RESOLUTION NO. 40

By: Helton and Martin of the
Senate

and

Kirby of the House

A Joint Resolution directing the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs to study the feasibility of locating a state veterans center in Comanche County; requiring certain report; directing distribution; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the mission of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide medical care and rehabilitative services for veterans and their families by operating veterans centers and hospitals, and by providing a claims and field services program, veteran outreach services and a program of financial aid and assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for the administration of the general duties of the War Veterans Commission of Oklahoma, which includes emergency aid and assistance to veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits. State veterans centers are maintained at Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Norman, Sulphur and Talihina, Oklahoma. The Department also operates the George Nigh Rehabilitation Institute in Okmulgee, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Fort Sill, located northwest of Lawton, in Comanche County, Oklahoma, was established by the United States Army in 1869. It gradually changed from a cavalry post to an artillery center. Today the post covers nearly ninety-five thousand (95,000) acres and

trains an average of almost three thousand soldiers a week. The post has been the home of the United States Army Field Artillery and is presently the headquarters of the Army's Field Artillery Center and School; and

WHEREAS, Lawton, Oklahoma, was founded August 6, 1901. With a land area in excess of thirty-one (31) square miles and a 1990 population of more than eighty thousand (80,000), Lawton is ranked as the city with the third largest population in the State of Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Lawton, Oklahoma, has a large population, including many veterans, but does not have the benefit of either a federal Veterans Administration Hospital or state veterans center within its immediate geographic area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 45TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

SECTION 1. The Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is hereby directed to study the feasibility of locating a state veterans center in Comanche County, Oklahoma.

SECTION 2. The War Veterans Commission of Oklahoma is hereby directed to report to the Oklahoma State Legislature and the Governor before the end of the calendar year 1996 on the feasibility of locating a state veterans center in Comanche County, Oklahoma, to better serve the veterans in Southwestern Oklahoma.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of State is hereby directed to distribute copies of this resolution to the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs and the Chair of the War Veterans Commission of Oklahoma.

SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this resolution shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 5th day of March, 1996.

President of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of
_____, 1996.

Speaker of the House of
Representatives