

House of Representatives

Supplementary Order Paper

Tuesday, 6 May 2014

Veterans' Support Bill

Proposed amendments

Hon Phil Goff, in Committee, to move the following amendments:

Clause 3

In *clause 3(1)*, replace *paragraphs (b) and (c)* (page 14, lines 9 to 13) with:

- (b) entitlements for eligible veterans; and
- (c) entitlements for eligible spouses, partners, and dependants of veterans or deceased veterans.

Clause 4

In *clause 4(10)* omit “certain” (page 16, line 4).

Clause 148

In *clause 148(1)(b)*, replace “superannuation; and” (page 105, line 7) with “superannuation.”

Delete *clause 148(1)(c)* (page 105, lines 8 to 18).

Clause 149

In *clause 149(1)(c)*, replace “superannuation; and” (page 106, lines 22 and 23) with “superannuation.”

Delete *clause 149(1)(d)* (page 106, lines 24 to 38 and page 107, lines 1 to 8).

In *clause 149(2)(b)*, replace “service; and” (page 107, line 14) with “service.”

Delete *clause 149(2)(c)* (page 107, lines 15 to 29).

Explanatory note

This Supplementary Order Paper would amend the Bill to remove the eligibility requirement for the veterans' pension that the veteran must suffer a 52 percent disability impairment. Labour set up a review of the War Pensions Act 1954

following its agreement in 2008 to settle the grievances of Vietnam veterans. The review was conducted by the President of the New Zealand Law Commission, Sir Geoffrey Palmer. An important recommendation of the New Zealand Law Commission was that all veterans who met the qualifying criteria of having served on a New Zealand Defence Force overseas deployment, and who were otherwise eligible for New Zealand Superannuation, should be eligible for the veterans' pension.

The National Government has rejected that recommendation in favour of retaining a further eligibility requirement of a veteran suffering from a 52 percent disability impairment. This equates to the level of disability required under the War Pensions Act 1954.

The veterans' pension carries some relatively small additional benefits. It confers on the recipient an automatic entitlement to a Community Services Card, it allows continued payment of the pension to a veteran while in hospital for more than 13 weeks, and a lump sum payment on a veteran's death. Most of all, however, returned service people want the veterans' pension because it recognises their pride in having served their country. In removing the disability impairment eligibility requirement, these amendments would recognise that all veterans who have served their nation and put their lives at risk should have that service honoured by allowing them to choose the veterans' pension rather than New Zealand Superannuation.
