



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4971

by Rep. Dave Vella

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

5 ILCS 490/166 new  
20 ILCS 2805/45 new  
105 ILCS 5/2-3.214 new

Amends the Department of Veterans Affairs Act. Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a statewide military history initiative aimed at preserving Illinois' war and veterans' memorials, monuments, plaques, and historic sites. Creates the Illinois War and Veterans Memorials and Monuments Fund as a special fund in the State treasury to support the preservation and restoration of outdoor memorials, monuments, plaques, and historic sites located within the State that highlight the service and sacrifice of Illinois' military veterans. Provides that, subject to appropriation, moneys in the Fund shall be expended to provide grants to local governments, historic societies, and veterans' organizations seeking to restore, repair, or maintain memorials, monuments, plaques, or historic sites within their communities. Requires the Department to establish criteria on how to identify war and veterans' memorials, monuments, plaques, and historic sites that are in need of preservation or restoration or other forms of aid, and match them with grants and other sources of funding based on the scope of the preservation or restoration project and on the grant applicant's ability to carry out and complete the project. Requires the Department to create and maintain a digital archive of Illinois veterans' records, letters, and oral histories and make such materials readily accessible to the general public and local schools. Requires the Department to partner with State colleges and universities to collect and preserve personal documents, photos, and interviews with Illinois veterans. Amends the State Commemorative Dates Act. Designates April 9 of each year as Illinois Veterans' Legacy Day to be observed throughout the State as a day to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of Illinois' military veterans with suitable activities designed to teach and preserve Illinois' military history and build social connections between Illinois' veterans population and school-aged youth. Amends the School Code. Requires the State Board of Education to prepare and make available to all school boards teaching modules on Illinois' military history for public school students enrolled in grades 6 through 12.

LRB104 17636 KTG 31067 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The State Commemorative Dates Act is amended by  
5 adding Section 166 as follows:

6 (5 ILCS 490/166 new)

7 Sec. 166. Illinois Veterans' Legacy Day. April 9 of each  
8 year is designated as Illinois Veterans' Legacy Day, to be  
9 observed throughout the State as a day to recognize and honor  
10 the service and sacrifice of Illinois' military veterans with  
11 suitable activities designed to teach and preserve Illinois'  
12 military history and build social connections between  
13 Illinois' veterans population and school-aged youth,  
14 including, but not limited to, veterans' speaking engagements  
15 with students at local elementary, middle, and high schools,  
16 and volunteer activities for students in the maintenance and  
17 upkeep of outdoor war and veterans' memorials and monuments.

18 Section 10. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act is  
19 amended by adding Section 45 as follows:

20 (20 ILCS 2805/45 new)

21 Sec. 45. Statewide military history initiative.

1       (a) The Department of Veterans Affairs shall develop and  
2 implement a statewide military history initiative aimed at  
3 preserving Illinois' war and veterans' memorials, monuments,  
4 plaques, and historic sites.

5       The Illinois War and Veterans Memorials and Monuments Fund  
6 is created as a special fund in the State treasury to support  
7 the preservation and restoration of outdoor memorials,  
8 monuments, plaques, and historic sites located within the  
9 State that highlight the service and sacrifice of Illinois'  
10 military veterans. The Fund shall consist of any moneys  
11 appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the  
12 preservation of Illinois' military history and monuments as  
13 well as any gifts, private donations, or other resources made  
14 to the Department for the purposes of this subsection. Subject  
15 to appropriation, moneys in the Fund shall be expended to  
16 provide grants to local governments, historic societies, and  
17 veterans' organizations seeking to restore, repair, or  
18 maintain a war or veterans' memorial, monument, plaque, or  
19 historic site within their community. The Department of  
20 Veterans Affairs shall establish criteria on how to identify  
21 war and veterans' memorials, monuments, plaques, and historic  
22 sites that are in need of preservation or restoration or other  
23 forms of aid, and match them with grants and other sources of  
24 funding based on the scope of the preservation or restoration  
25 project and on the grant applicant's ability to carry out and  
26 complete the project.

1       The Department may adopt any rules necessary to implement  
2 the military history initiative and grant program under this  
3 subsection.

4       (b) The Department of Veterans Affairs shall create and  
5 maintain a digital archive of Illinois veterans' records,  
6 letters, and oral histories and make such materials readily  
7 accessible to the general public and local schools. The  
8 Department shall partner with State colleges and universities  
9 to collect and preserve personal documents, photos, and  
10 interviews with Illinois veterans who served in the armed  
11 forces of the United States during World War II or during any  
12 subsequent period of time of armed hostilities in which the  
13 United States was engaged, including present conflicts.

14       Section 15. The School Code is amended by adding Section  
15 2-3.214 as follows:

16       (105 ILCS 5/2-3.214 new)

17       Sec. 2-3.214. Teaching modules on Illinois' military  
18 history. The State Board of Education shall prepare and make  
19 available to all school boards teaching modules on Illinois'  
20 military history for public school students enrolled in grades  
21 6 through 12. The State Board of Education shall seek input  
22 from veterans' groups when developing the teaching modules.