

1 AN ACT concerning military service.

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

4 Section 5. The Military Veterans Assistance Act is amended
5 by changing Section 9 as follows:

6 (330 ILCS 45/9) (from Ch. 23, par. 3089)

7 Sec. 9. Veterans Assistance Commission.

8 (a) In counties having 2 or more veteran service
9 organizations as may be recognized by law, the veteran service
10 organizations may come together to form a Veterans Assistance
11 Commission of such county. The Veterans Assistance Commission
12 of such county may act as the central service office for all
13 veterans and their families and for the families of deceased
14 veterans. The Commission shall be composed of delegates and
15 alternates from a majority of such veteran service
16 organizations selected annually as determined by each veteran
17 service organization. When so organized a Commission shall be
18 clothed with all the powers and may be charged with all the
19 duties theretofore devolving upon the different veteran
20 service organizations within the county as provided in Section
21 2.

22 (1) Every January 1, all Veterans Assistance
23 Commissions shall publish a notice to each veteran service

1 organization within their respective county calling on
2 them to select delegates and alternates for that county's
3 Veterans Assistance Commission by the methods provided in
4 this subsection. The Veterans Assistance Commissions shall
5 allow each veteran service organization until March 1 to
6 respond, at which time those selected and duly appointed
7 delegates and alternates shall begin their term of office
8 with full voting rights. Once selected, delegates and
9 alternates are bound by the Public Officer Prohibited
10 Activities Act.

11 (2) Except as provided in paragraph (3), veteran
12 service organizations shall be permitted to select one
13 delegate and one alternate.

14 (3) In counties with 5 or more of the same veteran
15 service organizations, all the constituent veteran service
16 organizations shall be permitted to select up to 5
17 delegates and 5 alternates to represent that veteran
18 service organization instead of each constituent veteran
19 service organization selecting one delegate and one
20 alternate. For the purposes of meeting the majority
21 requirement of this subsection, when the constituent
22 groups of a veteran service organization choose to select
23 those delegates and alternates, those selected and duly
24 appointed delegates and alternates shall represent the
25 aggregate percentage of the constituent groups.

26 (4) If a veteran service organization serves more than

1 one county, then it shall be permitted to select one
2 delegate and one alternate for the Veterans Assistance
3 Commission in each county in which at least 25% of its
4 members reside.

5 (5) All undertakings of, or actions taken by, the
6 Commission shall require a vote from a majority of the
7 full commission membership. No committee or other subgroup
8 of delegates and alternates formed by the Commission,
9 whether selected or appointed, may be granted the power or
10 authority to act in the place of or on behalf of the full
11 body of the duly selected or appointed Commission
12 membership.

13 (6) No superintendent or any other employee of the
14 Veterans Assistance Commission may retain the position of
15 delegate or alternate or any voting rights while employed
16 by the Veterans Assistance Commission.

17 (7) No committee or other subgroup of delegates and
18 alternates formed by the Commission, whether selected or
19 appointed, may bar any other duly appointed Commission
20 member from attending or otherwise being present during
21 any closed meetings or sessions of that committee or
22 group.

23 (8) The county may, at its discretion, appoint a
24 representative to the Commission who may attend any public
25 meeting of the Commission. That representative shall be a
26 veteran, may not have voting rights, may not hold any

1 office or title on the Commission, and may not be present
2 during any nonpublic meeting of the Commission, except as
3 authorized in this Act. For matters of executive session,
4 the non-voting county appointee may attend meetings that
5 are closed in accordance with paragraphs (1), (3), (5),
6 (6), or (11) of subsection (c) of Section 2 of the Open
7 Meetings Act for litigation matters not relating to
8 litigation between the Commission and the County.

9 (b) The Commission and its selected or appointed
10 superintendent shall have oversight of the distribution of all
11 moneys and supplies appropriated for the benefit of military
12 veterans and their families, subject to such rules,
13 regulations, administrative procedures or audit reviews as are
14 required by this Act and as are necessary as approved by the
15 Commission to carry out the spirit and intent of this Act. No
16 warrant authorized under this Act may be issued for the
17 payment of money without the presentation of an itemized
18 statement or claim, approved by the superintendent of the
19 Commission.

20 (c) The superintendent of the Veterans Assistance
21 Commission, selected, appointed, or hired by the Commission is
22 an at-will employee who shall be answerable to, and shall
23 report to, the Commission.

24 (d) The superintendent shall be evaluated annually and a
25 written report shall be generated. A copy of the report from
26 the evaluation shall be provided to the entire Commission

1 membership.

2 (e) A superintendent may be removed from office if, after
3 delegates from no less than 3 different veteran service
4 organizations file a written request calling for the
5 superintendent's removal, there is a vote from a majority of
6 the full Commission membership in favor of such removal.

7 (f) Each Veterans Assistance Commission shall establish
8 and maintain bylaws that outline the framework, policies, and
9 procedures for conducting the business of the Commission and
10 for the rules and regulations that apply to its members. Those
11 bylaws shall reflect compliance with all relevant laws at the
12 time they are established and shall be revised as necessary to
13 remain in compliance with current law. The establishment of
14 those bylaws, and any revisions thereafter, shall require a
15 minimum two-thirds majority vote of approval from a majority
16 of the full Commission membership.

17 (g) Each Veterans Assistance Commission shall, in writing,
18 adopt all applicable policies already established and in place
19 in its respective county, including, but not limited to,
20 policies related to compensation, employee rights, ethics,
21 procurement, and budget, and shall adapt those policies to fit
22 its organizational structure. Those policies shall then be
23 considered the policies of the Veterans Assistance Commission
24 and they shall be implemented and adhered to, accordingly, by
25 the superintendent and by the Commission. The Commission shall
26 amend its adopted policies whenever a county board amends an

1 applicable policy within 60 days of the county board
2 amendment.

3 (h) No warrant authorized under this Act may be issued for
4 the payment of money without the presentation of an itemized
5 statement or claim, approved by the superintendent of the
6 Commission and reported to the full Commission membership.

7 (i) Each Veterans Assistance Commission shall perform an
8 annual audit in accordance with the Governmental Account Audit
9 Act using either the auditing services provided by its
10 respective county or the services of an independent auditor
11 whose services shall be paid for by the Commission. A copy of
12 that audit report shall be provided to the president or
13 chairperson of the county board.

14 (j) Veterans Assistance Commissions and county boards
15 subject to this Act shall cooperate fully with the boards,
16 commissions, agencies, departments, and institutions of the
17 State. The funds held and made available by the county, the
18 State, or any other source shall be subject to financial and
19 compliance audits in accordance with the Illinois State
20 Auditing Act.

21 (k) The Veterans Assistance Commission shall be in charge
22 of the administration of any benefits provided under Articles
23 VI and IX of the Illinois Public Aid Code for military veterans
24 and their families.

25 (l) The Veterans Assistance Commission shall represent
26 veterans in their application for or attempts to obtain

1 benefits and services through State and federal agencies,
2 including representing veterans in their appeals of adverse
3 decisions.

4 (m) The superintendent of the Veterans Assistance
5 Commission and its employees must comply with the procedures
6 and regulations adopted by the Veterans Assistance Commission
7 and the regulations of the Department of Human Services.

8 (n) To further the intent of this Act of assisting
9 military veterans, this Act is to be construed so that the
10 Veterans Assistance Commission shall provide needed services
11 to eligible veterans.

12 (o) (1) In counties that do not have a Veterans Assistance
13 Commission prior to January 1, 2026, and in which there exists
14 a judicial circuit whose jurisdictional boundaries include
15 multiple counties, veteran service organizations located
16 within any of those counties that are within the judicial
17 circuit's jurisdictional boundaries may come together and
18 create a Jurisdictional Veterans Assistance Commission that
19 shall provide services to veterans and their families who
20 reside in those participating counties. Each participating
21 county shall levy the minimum amount of 0.02%, as indicated in
22 Section 2, and deposit the proceeds in the county treasury of
23 the seat of that judicial circuit. These proceeds shall be
24 used for employment of staff of the Veterans Assistance
25 Commission and financial assistance for the veterans and their
26 families that reside within the geographical boundaries of

1 that judicial circuit. The Veterans Assistance Commission
2 shall be known as the Veterans Assistance Commission of that
3 judicial circuit.

4 (2) Participating counties shall provide the support and
5 materials required to administer a Jurisdictional Veterans
6 Assistance Commission in the same manner individual counties
7 are required under this Act to provide support and materials
8 to single-county Veterans Assistance Commissions.

9 (3) The superintendent of a Veterans Assistance Commission
10 formed in accordance with paragraph (1) shall be selected from
11 among all honorably discharged veterans of all participating
12 counties within that judicial circuit's boundaries and shall
13 maintain a centrally located office within that judicial
14 circuit. However, for a Veterans Assistance Commission formed
15 within a large judicial circuit, the superintendent is not
16 precluded from having multiple offices that shall be owned and
17 maintained by the Veterans Assistance Commission.

18 (4) Delegates and alternates shall be selected by the
19 veterans service organizations of that judicial circuit in the
20 same manner as prescribed in paragraph (1) of subsection (a).

21 (5) Any existing Veterans Assistance Commission that is
22 part of a Judicial Circuit that is comprised of multiple
23 counties, as of January 1, 2025, may merge into a Veterans
24 Assistance Commission of that Judicial Circuit with its
25 neighboring counties. Those existing Veterans Assistance
26 Commissions that choose not to merge may continue to exist

1 independently while the other counties combine to form a new
2 Veterans Assistance Commission of that judicial circuit.

3 (Source: P.A. 102-484, eff. 8-20-21; 102-732, eff. 1-1-23;
4 102-1132, eff. 2-10-23.)