

1 AN ACT concerning veterans.

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

4 Section 5. The Department of Veterans' Affairs Act is
5 amended by changing Section 37 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/37)

7 Sec. 37. Illinois Joining Forces Foundation.

8 (a) The General Assembly finds that navigating the "sea of
9 goodwill" for those who serve in uniform is one of the greatest
10 challenges that transitioning veterans face; as a result, they
11 risk being unable to access many of the federal, State, and
12 non-profit resources available to them. Recognizing this
13 problem, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the
14 Department of Military Affairs acted to establish the Illinois
15 Joining Forces initiative, a public-private network of
16 military and veteran-serving organizations that are working
17 together, in person and online, to create a ~~no wrong door~~
18 system of support for the State's military and veteran
19 communities. Illinois Joining Forces is a nation-leading
20 model, awarded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and
21 the National Association of State Directors of Veterans
22 Affairs for its groundbreaking work in creating smarter,
23 collaborative community support for those in uniform, past and

1 present. The foundation created by this amendatory Act of the
2 98th General Assembly will serve to ensure the long-term
3 sustainability of Illinois Joining Forces, which is critically
4 important for the support of the State's military and veteran
5 communities.

6 (b) The Illinois Joining Forces Foundation shall benefit
7 service members, veterans, and their families by:

8 (1) convening military and veteran support
9 organizations, ~~through Illinois Joining Forces working~~
10 ~~groups,~~ to build cross-sector relationships and mutual
11 awareness;

12 (2) providing policy recommendations ~~through Illinois~~
13 ~~Joining Forces member working groups to the Illinois~~
14 ~~Veterans' Advisory Council;~~

15 ~~(3) facilitating the transfer of information and~~
16 ~~knowledge among Illinois Joining Forces member~~
17 ~~organizations;~~

18 ~~(4) maintaining and continuing to build the~~
19 ~~no wrong door online navigation platform;~~

20 (3) ~~(5)~~ educating ~~Illinois Joining Forces members and~~
21 ~~other~~ community providers regarding military and veteran
22 culture and needs, thus improving the collective capacity
23 of the support system; and

24 (4) ~~(6)~~ outreaching directly to service members,
25 veterans, and their families regarding the ~~no wrong door~~
26 system of support that Illinois Joining Forces provides to

1 them.

2 (c) For the purpose of this Section, "veterans service
3 organization" means an organization that meets all of the
4 following criteria:

5 (1) The organization is formed by and for United
6 States military veterans.

7 (2) The organization is chartered by the United States
8 Congress and incorporated in the State of Illinois.

9 (3) The organization has maintained a State
10 headquarters office in Illinois for the 10-year period
11 immediately preceding the effective date of this
12 amendatory Act of the 98th General Assembly.

13 (4) The organization maintains at least one office in
14 this State, staffed by a veterans service officer.

15 (5) The organization is capable of preparing a power
16 of attorney for a veteran and processing claims for
17 veterans services.

18 ~~(6) The organization is not funded by the State of
19 Illinois or by any county in this State.~~

20 (d) The General Assembly authorizes the Department of
21 Veterans' Affairs, in accordance with Section 10 of the State
22 Agency Entity Creation Act, to create the Illinois Joining
23 Forces Foundation as a not-for-profit foundation. The
24 Department shall file articles of incorporation as required
25 under the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of 1986 to
26 create the Foundation.

1 The Foundation's Board of Directors shall be appointed as
2 follows: one member appointed by the Governor; one member
3 appointed by the President of the Senate; one member appointed
4 by the Minority Leader of the Senate; one member appointed by
5 the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and one member
6 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
7 Representatives; ~~and all of the members of the Illinois~~
8 ~~Joining Forces Executive Committee, who shall be appointed by~~
9 ~~the Director of Veterans' Affairs.~~

10 The Foundation may also include up to 18 additional voting
11 members of the Board of Directors: up to 9 members to be
12 nominated and approved by the Board of Directors according to
13 the Foundation's bylaws, and up to 9 members to be appointed by
14 the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director of Military
15 Affairs. The Board shall have an equal number of board or
16 department appointed members. To ensure parity, no additional
17 nominee may be considered by the Board of Directors unless a
18 like appointment is made by the Department of Veterans'
19 Affairs or the Department of Military Affairs, and vice versa.

20 In addition to any veterans service organization
21 otherwise represented on the Board of Directors, a veterans
22 service organization may designate in writing an ex officio,
23 non-voting participant to the Board of Directors. Any veterans
24 service organization appointee under this provision ~~Section~~
25 does not count towards a quorum.

26 The Director of Veterans' Affairs, or the Director's

1 designee, and a designee chosen by the Director of Military
2 Affairs who is a senior management official of the Department
3 of Military Affairs with the authority to make decisions on
4 behalf of the agency shall serve as members of the
5 Foundation's Board of Directors. Board of Director
6 appointments shall be for 2-year terms. Vacancies shall be
7 filled by the official who made the statutory appointment
8 ~~recommendation for the vacated appointment~~. No member of the
9 Board of Directors may receive compensation for his or her
10 services to the Foundation. Upon appointment, the Board of
11 Directors, as members of a public entity, shall be represented
12 and indemnified pursuant to the requirements of the State
13 Employee Indemnification Act.

14 (e) The purposes of the Foundation are to: promote,
15 support, assist, and sustain Illinois Joining Forces
16 operations; solicit and accept grants and private donations
17 and disburse them for the stated intent of the Foundation or
18 the private donor; solicit and generate public and private
19 funding and donations that assist in enhancing the Illinois
20 Joining Forces mission, services, programs, and operations;
21 and engage generally in other lawful endeavors consistent with
22 the foregoing purposes. The foundation shall operate within
23 the provisions of the General Not For Profit Corporation Act
24 of 1986.

25 (f) The ~~As soon as practicable after the Foundation is~~
26 ~~created,~~ the Board of Directors shall meet, organize, and

1 designate, by majority vote, a chairperson, a treasurer, a
2 secretary, and any additional officers that may be needed to
3 carry out the activities of the Foundation and shall adopt
4 bylaws of the Foundation. In consultation with the
5 Foundation's Board of Directors, the Department of Veterans'
6 Affairs or the Department of Military Affairs may provide
7 assistance in adopting other rules deemed necessary to govern
8 Foundation procedures. ~~The Department of Veterans' Affairs, in~~
9 ~~consultation with the Department of Military Affairs, may~~
10 ~~adopt other rules deemed necessary to govern Foundation~~
11 ~~procedures.~~

12 (g) The Foundation may request and accept gifts, grants,
13 donations, or bequests from the federal government or its
14 agencies or officers or from any person, firm, or corporation,
15 and may expend receipts on activities that it considers
16 suitable to the performance of its duties under this Section
17 and consistent with any requirement of the grant, gift,
18 donation, or bequest. Funds collected by the Foundation shall
19 be considered private funds and shall be held in an
20 appropriate account outside of the State treasury. Private
21 funds collected by the Foundation are not subject to the
22 Public Funds Investment Act. The treasurer of the Foundation
23 shall be the custodian of all Foundation funds. The treasurer
24 shall be required to obtain a fidelity or surety bond on
25 satisfactory terms and in sufficient amounts to protect the
26 interests of the Foundation, the cost of which shall be

1 reimbursed by the Foundation. The Foundation and its officers
2 shall be responsible for the approval of the recording of
3 receipts, approval of payments, and the proper filing of
4 required reports. The Foundation may be assisted in carrying
5 out its functions by Department of Military Affairs and
6 Department of Veterans' Affairs personnel as determined by the
7 respective Directors. The Department of Military Affairs and
8 the Department of Veterans' Affairs may ~~shall~~ provide
9 reasonable assistance to the Foundation to achieve the
10 purposes of the Foundation as determined by the respective
11 Directors. The Foundation shall cooperate fully with the
12 boards, commissions, agencies, departments, and institutions
13 of the State. The funds held and made available by the Illinois
14 Joining Forces Foundation shall be subject to financial and
15 compliance audits in accordance with the Illinois State
16 Auditing Act. The Foundation shall not have any power of
17 eminent domain. The Foundation shall not construct or make any
18 permanent improvements to any real property.

19 (h) The Foundation must provide a written notice to any
20 entity providing a gift, grant, donation, or bequest to the
21 Foundation that the Foundation is not subject to the
22 provisions of the Public Funds Investment Act, which Act
23 places limitations on the types of securities in which a
24 public agency may invest public funds.

25 (i) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the
26 Foundation is not eligible for any grant administered ~~or~~

1 ~~funded~~ by the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the
2 Department of Military Affairs, but may receive services,
3 including, but not limited to, contractual services, provided
4 by either Department.

5 (Source: P.A. 100-10, eff. 6-30-17.)