

1 AN ACT in relation to 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 adding Section 15 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/15 new)

7 Sec. 15. Reimbursements to veterans service organizations.

8 (a) In this Section:

9 "Veterans service officer" means an individual employed by
10 a veterans service organization and accredited by the United
11 States Department of Veterans Affairs to process and adjudicate
12 claims and other benefits for veterans and their spouses and
13 beneficiaries.

14 "Veterans service organization" means an organization that
15 meets all of the following criteria:

16 (1) It is formed by and for United States military
17 veterans.

18 (2) It is chartered by the United States Congress and
19 incorporated in the State of Illinois.

20 (3) It maintains at least one office in this State
21 staffed by a veterans service officer.

22 "Veterans services" means the processing and adjudication
23 of the following claims and other benefits for veterans and
24 their spouses and beneficiaries:

25 (1) Disability compensation benefits.

26 (2) Disability pension benefits.

27 (3) Dependents' indemnity compensation.

28 (4) Widow's death pension.

29 (5) Burial benefits.

30 (6) Confirmed and continued claims.

31 (7) Vocational rehabilitation and education.

32 (8) Waivers of indebtedness.

1 (9) Miscellaneous.

2 (b) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall
3 reimburse a veterans service organization for veterans
4 services rendered on behalf of veterans and their spouses and
5 beneficiaries by a veterans service officer employed by the
6 organization. The reimbursement shall be computed at the rate
7 of \$0.005 for each dollar of benefits obtained for veterans or
8 their spouses or beneficiaries residing in Illinois as a result
9 of the efforts of the veterans service officer. There shall be
10 no reimbursement under this Section for the value of health
11 care received in a health care facility under the jurisdiction
12 of the United States Veterans Administration.

13 (c) To be eligible for reimbursement under this Section, a
14 veterans service organization must document the amount of
15 moneys obtained for veterans and their spouses and
16 beneficiaries in the form and manner required by the
17 Department. The documentation must include the submission to
18 the Department of a copy of the organization's report or
19 reports to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs
20 stating the amount of moneys obtained by the organization for
21 veterans and their spouses and beneficiaries in the State
22 fiscal year for which reimbursement under this Section is
23 requested. The organization must submit the copy of the report
24 or reports to the Department no later than July 31 following
25 the end of the State fiscal year for which reimbursement is
26 requested.

27 (d) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall pay the
28 reimbursement under this Section to a veterans service
29 organization in a single annual payment for each State fiscal
30 year, beginning with the State fiscal year that begins on July
31 1, 2003. Subject to appropriation, the Department must make the
32 payment for a State fiscal year on or before December 31 of the
33 succeeding State fiscal year.

34 (e) A veterans service organization shall use
35 reimbursement moneys received under this Section only for the
36 purpose of paying the salary and expenses of one or more

1 veterans service officers and the organization's related
2 expenses incurred in employing the officer or officers for the
3 processing and adjudication of claims and other benefits for
4 veterans and their spouses and beneficiaries.

5 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
6 becoming law.