

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 Department of Veterans Affairs Act is
5 amended by changing Section 2 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/2) (from Ch. 126 1/2, par. 67)

7 Sec. 2. Powers and duties. The Department shall have the
8 following powers and duties:

9 To perform such acts at the request of any veteran, or his
10 or her spouse, surviving spouse or dependents as shall be
11 reasonably necessary or reasonably incident to obtaining or
12 endeavoring to obtain for the requester any advantage, benefit
13 or emolument accruing or due to such person under any law of
14 the United States, the State of Illinois or any other state or
15 governmental agency by reason of the service of such veteran,
16 and in pursuance thereof shall:

17 (1) ~~1.~~ Contact veterans, their survivors and
18 dependents and advise them of the benefits of state and
19 federal laws and assist them in obtaining such benefits;

20 (2) ~~2.~~ Establish field offices and direct the
21 activities of the personnel assigned to such offices;

22 (3) ~~3.~~ Create a volunteer field force of accredited
23 representatives, representing educational institutions,
24 labor organizations, veterans organizations, employers,
25 churches, and farm organizations;

26 (4) ~~4.~~ Conduct informational and training services;

27 (5) ~~5.~~ Conduct educational programs through
28 newspapers, periodicals and radio for the specific purpose
29 of disseminating information affecting veterans and their
30 dependents;

31 (6) ~~6.~~ Coordinate the services and activities of all
32 state departments having services and resources affecting

1 veterans and their dependents;

2 (7) ~~7.~~ Encourage and assist in the coordination of
3 agencies within counties giving service to veterans and
4 their dependents;

5 (8) ~~8.~~ Cooperate with veterans organizations and other
6 governmental agencies;

7 (9) ~~9.~~ Make, alter, amend and promulgate reasonable
8 rules and procedures for the administration of this Act;

9 (10) ~~10.~~ Make and publish annual reports to the
10 Governor regarding the administration and general
11 operation of the Department; ~~and~~

12 (11) ~~11.~~ Encourage the State to implement more programs
13 to address the wide range of issues faced by Persian Gulf
14 War Veterans, especially those who took part in combat, by
15 creating an official commission to further study Persian
16 Gulf War Diseases. The commission shall consist of 9
17 members appointed as follows: the Speaker and Minority
18 Leader of the House of Representatives and the President
19 and Minority Leader of the Senate shall each appoint one
20 member from the General Assembly, the Governor shall
21 appoint 4 members to represent veterans' organizations,
22 and the Department shall appoint one member. The commission
23 members shall serve without compensation; and ~~and~~

24 (12) Conduct an annual review of the benefits received
25 by Illinois veterans that compares benefits received by
26 Illinois veterans with the benefits received by veterans in
27 all other states and U.S. territories. The required annual
28 review shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the
29 average benefit paid to individual veterans from Illinois,
30 in direct comparison to the average benefit paid to
31 individual veterans of each of the other states and U.S.
32 territories; (2) the number of veterans receiving benefits
33 in Illinois for the first time during the year compared to
34 the number of claims filed by Illinois veterans during the
35 year; (3) the aggregate number of Illinois veterans
36 receiving benefits compared to the number of veterans from

1 each of the other states and U.S. territories receiving
2 benefits; and (4) a categorical analysis of the types of
3 injuries and disabilities for which benefits are being paid
4 in Illinois and each of the other states and U.S.
5 territories. The benefits review shall be reported to the
6 Governor, the General Assembly, and the Illinois
7 Congressional delegation upon the completion of the report
8 each year.

9 The Department may accept and hold on behalf of the State,
10 if for the public interest, a grant, gift, devise or bequest of
11 money or property to the Department made for the general
12 benefit of Illinois veterans, including the conduct of
13 informational and training services by the Department and other
14 authorized purposes of the Department. The Department shall
15 cause each grant, gift, devise or bequest to be kept as a
16 distinct fund and shall invest such funds in the manner
17 provided by the Public Funds Investment Act, as now or
18 hereafter amended, and shall make such reports as may be
19 required by the Comptroller concerning what funds are so held
20 and the manner in which such funds are invested. The Department
21 may make grants from these funds for the general benefit of
22 Illinois veterans. Grants from these funds, except for the
23 funds established under Sections 2.01a and 2.03, shall be
24 subject to appropriation.

25 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds
26 appropriated from the Korean War Veterans National Museum and
27 Library Fund, to private organizations for the benefit of the
28 Korean War Veterans National Museum and Library.

29 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds
30 appropriated from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, for
31 benefits authorized under the Survivors Compensation Act.

32 (Source: P.A. 92-198, eff. 8-1-01; 92-651, eff. 7-11-02;
33 93-839, eff. 7-30-04.)

34 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
35 1, 2006.