

AN ACT concerning government.

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

Section 5. The Department of Veterans' Affairs Act is amended by adding Section 38 as follows:

(20 ILCS 2805/38 new)

Sec. 38. Veterans' Service-Related Ailments Task Force.

(a) The Veterans' Service-Related Ailments Task Force is created. The Task Force shall review and make recommendations regarding veterans' service-related ailments that are not recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including exploring why certain service-related ailments are not recognized and determining what may be done to have them recognized.

Additionally, the Task Force shall assess ways the State of Illinois can improve the rate at which disability compensation claims are approved by the federal government and correct the disparity between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' approval of disability compensation for Illinois veterans and that which is approved for veterans in other states.

(b) The Task Force shall have 15 members, comprised as follows:

(1) The Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director's

designee, who shall serve as chairperson.

(2) 2 Members from the House of Representatives, appointed one each by the Speaker of the House and the House Minority Leader.

(3) 2 Members of the Senate, appointed one each by the President of the Senate and the Senate Minority Leader.

(4) One veteran, appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(5) One medical professional with experience working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(6) 4 representatives from a variety of veterans organizations representing geographic diversity in the State, appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(7) 4 members, one of whom shall be appointed by the chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be appointed by the minority spokesperson of the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be appointed by the chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed by the minority spokesperson of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Senate. Those appointed to the Task Force under this paragraph shall be members of different Illinois counties' Veterans Assistance Commissions, Veteran Service Officers, and VITAS officials.

Task Force members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for their expenses incurred in performing their duties.

(c) The Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 months beginning July 1, 2019, and at other times as determined by the Task Force.

(d) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide administrative and other support to the Task Force.

(e) The Task Force shall prepare a report that summarizes its work and makes recommendations resulting from its study. The Task Force shall submit the report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2020. The Task Force is dissolved, and this Section is repealed, on December 31, 2021.

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