

S.F. No. 485 – Veterans and Military Affairs (Third Engrossment)

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Article 1 - Veterans and Military Affairs Appropriations

Article 1 makes appropriations to the Department of Military Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. Detail for these appropriations can be found in the spreadsheet prepared by Andrew Erickson of Senate Counsel, Research, and Fiscal Analysis.

Article 2 - Veterans and Military Affairs

Section 1 (10.578) clarifies the name of the Veterans Suicide Prevention *and Awareness* Day and requires the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs (hereinafter commissioner) to coordinate activities on the day of observance in October to raise awareness of, and promote the prevention of, veteran suicides.

Section 2 (15.057) adds the Department of Veterans Affairs to the list of agencies that are exempt from the prohibition on using funds to pay the salary or expenses of a publicity representative.

Section 3 (16B.276, subdivision 1) defines the following terms for purposes of the Capitol flag program: “active service,” “eligible family member,” “killed in the line of duty,” and “public safety officer.”

Subdivision 2 establishes the Capitol flag program in the Department of Administration, which provides Minnesota and American flags that were flown over the Minnesota State Capitol to families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty or members of the armed forces who died while in active service. In addition to any appropriations, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) may receive gifts to support the program, and the program will operate to the extent that sufficient funds are available.

Subdivision 3 provides that a request may only be made by a legislator or state constitutional officer on behalf of an eligible family to the Commissioner of Administration.

Subdivision 4 requires the legislative bodies and constitutional officers to adopt procedures for the administration of flag requests, including verifying eligibility.

Subdivision 5 allows for the distribution of flags for deaths that occurred prior to the effective date of this section for a fee unless donated funds are available. For deaths on or after August 1, 2021, flags are provided to eligible families free of charge.

This section is effective August 1, 2021.

Section 4 (190.07) makes changes to the adjutant general section of the military forces chapter of law.

Subdivision 1 requires the Governor to appoint an adjutant general within 120 days of vacancy, strikes language restricting candidates to members of the National Guard in this state, and requires that the adjutant general hold the rank of colonel or above.

Subdivision 2 requires that the adjutant general be promoted, if necessary, to the rank of major general on the date of the Governor's appointment.

Subdivision 3 specifies that the adjutant general serves a single term of seven years.

Subdivision 4 is a new subdivision specifying protocols when there is a vacancy. The Governor may appoint a person as acting adjutant general, and if the Governor does not appoint a person, the deputy adjutant general becomes the temporary adjutant general.

Section 5 (196.081) allows the commissioner to establish a veterans stable housing initiative, to provide resources and support to homeless veterans. Private data on individuals maintained in the Homeless Veteran Registry may be shared with members of the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness and Homeless Veteran Registry partners to expedite the coordination of homeless efforts.

Sections 6 to 9 (197.791, subs. 4, 5, 5a, 5b) make technical changes and restructures subdivisions for clarity related to Minnesota GI postsecondary educational assistance, apprenticeship and on-the-job training benefits, and other professional and educational benefits.

Section 10 (198.006) amends supplemental programs for veterans.

New paragraph (b) allows the commissioner to work with federal, state, local, and private entities to expand the availability of dental services for veterans home residents.

New paragraph (c) allows the commissioner to provide adult day care center programs and collect fees from program participants. The commissioner is authorized to apply for and accept federal funding for purposes of providing adult day care center programs.

Section 11 is a technical revisor instruction to renumber subdivisions.