

Policy, Planning, Legislative Affairs

State and Federal Legislation Tracker

Legislation Supporting Veterans

HB 164 (Staats) Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) in Department of Military Affairs, providing for burial benefits. 1/14/21 HVETERANS

HB 202 (O'Neal) Amends the Second-Class County Code, in special powers and duties of the county, further providing for flags to decorate graves. Flags must be American made and color fast, adds summary offense for cemetery (maintenance) and for families who remove flags within stipulated dates re: Memorial Day and Veterans Day. H VAEP 1/21/21

HB 114 (Miller) Amends Title 71 (State Government), in civil service reform, providing for excepted service hiring and promotion authority; and imposing duties on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Has been determined to be eligible for services, supports or benefits under a program for disabled veterans administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs of the Commonwealth. H L&I 1/11/21

HB 190 (Ciresi) - Amends the Taxpayer Relief Act, in senior citizens property tax and rent rebate assistance, further providing for definitions. Defines "Income" to include all benefits received under Social Security, but exempts "Federal Veterans' disability payments or State Veterans benefits. *H Finance* 1/21/21

Legislation Supporting Veterans

HB 386 (Pisciottano) - Amends the State Lottery Law adding language establishing an instant lottery game to benefit veterans (property tax relief, reduced fare transit services, and elderly services) who reside in the commonwealth. Creates State Lottery Commission. Ensures design and theme of game regularly change to remain competitive. Authorizes transfer of revenue funds to DMVA VTF. **Introduced H VAEP 2/3/21.**

HB 491 (Boback) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) establishing Chapter 99 regarding Veterans' Benefit Payment Exclusion. One hundred percent of a veterans' benefit payment may not be included as income for any commonwealth program. The exclusion shall also apply to an unmarried surviving spouse upon the death of a veteran for any compensation or payment the unmarried surviving spouse is entitled to receive. **Introduced and referred to H VAEP 2/9/21.**

SB 150 (Ward) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in veterans' pensions and benefits, further providing for blind veteran's pension and for amputee and paralyzed veteran's pension by increasing the compensation from \$150 to \$180. **Introduced and referred to S VAEP 2/1/21**

SB 122 (Brooks) Amends Title 53 (Municipalities Generally), in consolidated county assessment, exempting from taxation all veterans' organizations known as Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion which are founded, endowed and maintained by public or private charity, together with the grounds annexed and necessary for the occupancy and use of the veterans' organizations, and social halls and grounds owned and occupied by the veterans' organizations and used on a regular basis for activities which contribute to the support of the veterans' organizations, as long as the net receipts from the activities are used solely for the charitable purposes of the veterans' organizations. **Introduced and referred to S Finance 1/26/21.**

Legislation – Military/NG

HB 159 (Pollinchock) - Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations), in child protective services, for reporting procedure, for disposition of complaints received, for responsibility for investigation, for access to information in Statewide database, for information. Further provides that the reporting procedure includes whether the report concerns a military family and if so, any necessary explanatory information. *H CHILDREN & YOUTH 1/14/21*

HB 237 (Warren) Amends Title 18 (Crimes & Offenses), in firearms and other dangerous articles, providing for safe storage of a firearm when residing with a person not to possess a firearm. Adds summary offense for violations. Exempt's persons who carry a firearm. Defense to prosecution if firearm possession is incidental to performance of duties of the U.S. Armed Forces, PANG, or local, state, federal law enforcement. *H JUDICIARY 1/25/21*

HB 387 (O'Neal) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in professional and occupational licenses, further providing for retention of licenses and certifications of persons entering military service by adding that a person licensed or certified by the Department of Health to practice any profession or to work at any trade or occupation shall not thereby forfeit his or her current license or registration and shall be exempt from any continuing educational requirements or in-service training requirements. **Introduced H VAEP 2/3/21**

Legislation – Military/NG

HB 388 (O'Neal) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in professional and occupational licenses, further providing for definitions, providing for a policy for the award of academic credit for military training; and making editorial changes. The bill provides for academic credit for military service. Defines and updates educational insituons. Directs PDE to adopt policy and procedure for the evaluation of mil training and experience for academic credit. **Introduced and referred to H VAEP. 2/3/21**

HB 389 (O'Neal) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in professional and occupational licenses, providing for military medical personnel pilot program. The bill establishes that the Department of Health and the Department of State, in consultation with the department, shall establish a pilot program in which military medical personnel may practice and perform certain delegated duties that constitute the practice of medicine under the supervision of a physician or podiatrist who holds an active, unrestricted license issued by the commonwealth. **Introduced and referred to H VAEP. 2/3/21**

Legislation (Departmental)

HB 205 (Gainey) Amends Title 25 (Elections), in voter registration, further providing for methods of voter registration, providing for automatic registration of qualified electors and further providing for time. PA DOS Sec. Shall by rule establish a schedule by which PennDOT & DMVA shall provide the legal, name, age, residence, citizenship info, and signature for each individual who is qualified to vote. H SGOVT 1/22/21

SB 141 (Hughes) Amends Title 25 (Elections), in registration system, providing for departmental responsibilities; in voter registration, providing for methods of voter registration, for approval of registration applications; and providing for privacy and security standards. Establishes responsibilities for the Department of Transportation and the Department of Human Services and for automatic voter registration in the SURE system. Provides for automatic voter registration through driver's license registration. Establishes privacy and security standards for protecting residents' information. Includes an application for any financial assistance, compensation, benefit or service available, offered or to which the individual is entitled pursuant to any program administered by DMVA. Provides a procedure for the return of completed voter registration applications from Armed Forces recruitment centers. S STATE GOVT 1/28/21.

Legislation (Departmental)

HB 336 (MacKenzie) Amends the Administrative Code, in administrative organization, providing for the name change of the Department of Banking and Securities to be reflected in the code; in organization of departmental administrative boards and commissions and of advisory boards and commissions, repealing the Board to License Private Bankers provision; in commonwealth agency fees, repealing the mortgage licensing fees and money transmitter fees and providing for takeover disclosure law; in powers and duties of the Department of Banking and its departmental administrative board and commission, providing a technical change; and repealing duties from the Pennsylvania Securities Commission. The following boards, commissions and offices are hereby placed and made departmental; administrative boards: In the DMVA, Armory Board of the State of PA, and Board of Trustees of Scotland School for Veterans Children. DMVA shall perform executive and administrative work of the Commonwealth. H COMMERCE 1/29/21.

Legislation Under Review

HB 326 (O'Neal) Amends Titles 35 (Health & Safety) and 51 (Military Affairs), in COVID-19 disaster emergency, providing that within 45 days of the effective date, the National Guard shall establish and operate in each county a site for the mass distribution and administration of any vaccine for COVID-19; in the governor as commander-in-chief, limiting the powers of the governor related to public health duties; and, in Pennsylvania National Guard, providing that the guard shall perform the duties relating to COVID-19 vaccine. Active Duty for Emergency. New language adds C.) Distribution and administration of items for a virus; D – Report (45 day window for NG to report to GA) Defines "Region" and "Virus." **Final Passage in House 202-0; 2/5/21. Introduced and received Senate VAEP; 2/5/21**

HB 196 (Day) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in military leave of absence, further providing for employment discrimination for military membership or duty. Adds Out-of-State NG members applicability. **H Voted favorably from H VAEP CMTE + reported as Committed H VAEP 2/3/21. Awaiting 2nd Consideration. Set on H Calendar 3/15/21.**

SB 96 (Robinson) PN 75) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in registration of vehicles, increasing optional contributions to the Veterans' Trust Fund during driver's license issue and renewal from \$3 to \$5. For vehicle registration, increases VTF contribution from \$6 to \$10. **Senate VAEP voted favorably and reported as committed 2/3/21. Awaiting 2nd Consideration. Set on S calendar 2/22/21**

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated - RETX

SCO 266 (Sabatina) Expands the Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption program.

SCO 270 (Bartolotta) Expands the Property Tax Exemption Program for disabled veterans.

SCO 316 (Tartaglione) Amends the Disabled Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption Law relating to calculation of income and the determination of need.

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated - Considered last session and under review

SCO 351 (Bartolotta) Directs the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to create logos to be used to promote veteran-owned businesses.

HCO 457 (Pisciottano) Increases the monthly stipend for veterans who are blind, paralyzed, or amputees as a result of their service to \$200 per month.

HCO 503 (O'Neal) Requires cemeteries to remove flags when they become unsightly or weatherworn after Veteran's Day, and for the flags to be American-made.

SCO 286 (Stefano) Provides a reduction in fees for military veterans acquiring license plate registration

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated

HCO 465 (Deasy) Amends Title 51 to require the establishment of a "Combat to College" program at state education institutions.

HCO 606 (Evans) Allows incarcerated veterans, diagnosed after imprisonment, to apply to the court for relief putting forward their diagnosis of post- traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries as mitigating factors in post- conviction review.

HCO 618 (Evans) Provides for a program to combat veteran homelessness and a housing ombudsman to advocate for homeless veterans.

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated

HCO 624 (Kirkland) Provides one free medical record to any homeless veteran for the purpose of applying for disability benefits.

HCO 694 (Markosek) Creates a "Green Alert" system in Pennsylvania.

HCO 816 (Gillen) Ensures that a service member's military education and training are taken into consideration for the purpose of fulfilling requirements for professional credentials related to agriculture.

HCO 860 (Guenst) Provides \$500,000 for the diagnostic technology to carry out the scans and another \$500,000 to pay for hardware and software costs of the diagnostic technology and administrative costs for service members and veterans.

HCO 867 (Guenst) Supplements the Returning Heroes Tax Credit with an additional \$2,000 tax credit.

SCO 119 (Boscola) Amends the State Lottery Law to exclude veterans' service-related disability compensation from being considered as income when determining eligibility for PACE and PACENET.

SCO 125 (Pittman) Excludes federal veteran's disability benefits from the calculation of income.

SCO 135 (Pittman) Allows volunteer fire departments, veterans organizations and other non-profits to conduct small games of chance (SGOC) fundraisers online amidst the COVID-19 disaster emergency declaration.

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated

SCO 193 (Scavello) Extends Pennsylvania veteran benefits to veterans of allied countries living in the commonwealth.

SCO 299 (Hutchinson) Changes several aspects of Title 30 and Title 34 relating to license fees and requirements relating to active duty and veteran military personnel.

SCO 363 (Tomlinson) Grants disabled veterans a 50 percent discount in toll rates for use of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

SCO 411 (Costa) Exempts veterans' disability benefits as eligible income under the following acts: Senior Citizen Property Tax and Rent Rebate Assistance (Act 1), PACE/PACENET and Section 1901 of the Vehicle Code (exempts persons, entities, and vehicles).

SCO 448 (Muth) Establishes the Emergency Relief Program.

SCO 490 (Brewster) Exempts the cost of fishing licenses in Pennsylvania for veterans and other individuals taking steps towards physical or mental recovery as part of therapeutic recreation events or programs.

Co-sponsorship Memos Circulated

HCO 129 (Day) Extends employment protections to Pennsylvania citizens who are members of another state's National Guard.

HCO 578 (McNeill) Reduces the residency requirement for veterans and their families applying for the state Educational Gratuity Program to one year.

Federal Legislation

H.R. 324

Introduced: January 15, 2021

Rep. Cheri Bustos, Illinois (D)

This House Resolution seeks specification of the actual Federal share to be paid for activation of the National Guard during the coronavirus pandemic. It has been referred to the House Armed Services Committee for review.

H.R. 333

Introduced: January 15, 2021

Sponsored By: Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr., Georgia (D)

This law would amend title 10, United States Code, to permit concurrent receipt of both military retirement pay and VA compensation for service-connected medical issues for those who are VA-rated as 50% or less service-connected disabled. The House Resolution would extend eligibility “for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service” and other purposes. This bill is currently under review by the House Armed Services Committee and the House Committees on Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 303:

Introduced: January 13, 2021

Sponsored by: Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Florida (R)

This Resolution seeks to allow “additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability” to qualify for both VA disability pay and military retirement pay “by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation”. The Resolution has been referred to two committees—the House Armed Services Committee and the House Veterans Affairs Committee where it goes under review pending further action.

Federal Legislation - Veterans

H.R. 148

Introduced: January 4, 2021

Sponsored by: Rep Donald Norcross, New Jersey (D)

This legislation would, if passed, provide a work opportunity tax credit for military spouses. This law would also offer flexible spending arrangements for those who need military childcare services. This bill has been sent to committee; it is under review by the House Armed Services Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee.

H.R. 147

Introduced: January 4, 2021

Sponsored by: Rep Donald Norcross, New Jersey (D)

This legislation proposes to amend portions of the United States Code (Title 10 and Title 38) to improve transition services for military members separating from the United States military. This was introduced in January 2021 and is under consideration by the House Ways and Means Committee as well as the House Armed Services Committee.

H.R. 185

Introduced January 4, 2021

Sponsored By: Rep. Robert Wittman, Virginia (R)

This House Resolution would, if passed, amend title 10, United States Code, to create a requirement for a single disability exam “as part of the required Department of Defense physical examination for separating members of the Armed Forces”. This measure is under review by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.