

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2014

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on July 16, 2014, at the American Legion Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

Members Present

- Harold Barton, Air Force Association
- Brett Reistad, American Legion
- Richard Mansfield, AMVETS
- Donald Kaiserman, Association of the United States Army
- Allan McCroskey, Disabled American Veterans
- Abe Zino, Fleet Reserve Association
- John Edwards, Korean War Veterans Association
- Rich Rinaldo, Legion of Valor
- John Prendergast, Marine Corps League
- Stuart Williams, Military Officers Association of America
- Robert Fairchild, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- William Barrett, Military Order of the World Wars
- Thomas Moran, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Glenn Rodriguez, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- David Coffield, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Carmen Gentile, Reserve Officers Association
- James Clem, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Thomas Gimble, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Robert Huffman, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Marie Juliano, Women Marines Association
- Thad Jones, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
- Rich Schollmann, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Paul Galanti, Commissioner of Veterans Services (later, Deputy Commissioner Cathy Wilson)

Members Absent

- George Coker, American Ex-POWs
- Matthew Dailey, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Shawn Otto, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

- Jack Murray, Legion of Valor Alternate
- Frank Driscoll, Navy Seabee Veterans Alternate

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Leslie Frazier, Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Al Pianalto, Office of Delegate Kirk Cox
- Christina Lipin, Department of Motor Vehicles
- John Crooks, Department of Planning and Budget
- Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services
- Jon Hatfield, Department of Veterans Services
- Jack Hilgers, Department of Veterans Services
- Brandi Jancaitis, Department of Veterans Services
- Danielle Weaver, Department of Veterans Services
- Cathy Wilson, Department of Veterans Services

Others Present

- Bill Ashton
- Bill Whitt, Fleet Reserve Association

Items included in the Agenda Packet

Agenda (Agenda Item II)

Reports (Agenda Item IV)

- Board of Veterans Services Report
- Veterans Services Foundation Report
- Department of Veterans Services Report

JLC 2015 Initiatives (Agenda Item V)

- MOAA – summary and four position papers
- Veterans of Foreign Wars – one position paper
- Fleet Reserve Association – one position paper
- National Association for Uniformed Services – one position paper
- Proposed JLC 2015 Initiatives – Summary Sheet

Items distributed at the meeting

- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) “Virginia Troops to Trucks” brochure

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Donald Kaiserman called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Vice Chairman Thomas “Chip” Moran led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination

The roll was called, and 21 of the 24 veterans service organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Mr. Thad Jones, the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), Mr. Rich Schollmann, the Chairman of the Veterans Services

Foundation (VSF), and Commissioner Paul Galanti of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) were recorded as present.

Approval of the agenda

Mr. Brett Reistad made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Allan McCroskey, to approve the agenda as presented. The **motion** carried **unanimously** (see *Attachment 1*).

Introductions of Guests

Chairman Kaiserman asked Mr. Steven Combs to introduce the guests. Their names and organizations are recorded above. Chairman Kaiserman welcomed them to the meeting.

Approve May 21, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Mr. John Prendergast made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Reistad, to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2014 JLC meeting as drafted. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Reports

Department of Veterans Services

Commissioner Paul Galanti delivered the report of the Department of Veterans Services (see *Attachment 2*). He announced that he would have to leave early to attend an event in honor of his late wife, Mrs. Phyllis Galanti, at the Virginia Historical Society.

Commissioner Galanti presented Chairman Kaiserman with a plaque to recognize and thank him for his two years of services as JLC Chairman. Chairman Kaiserman thanked Commissioner Galanti for the DVS report.

Several Council members asked questions about the planned veterans care centers in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia. The questions were answered by Chairman Kaiserman, Vice Chairman Moran, Commissioner Galanti, Deputy Commissioner Cathy Wilson, or Mr. Combs.

In response to a question about land acquisition, Chairman Kaiserman noted that efforts were underway, supported by BVS members Delegate Rich Anderson and Senator Toddy Puller, to identify property in Northern Virginia for donation. Vice Chairman Moran added that similar efforts were underway in Hampton Roads with the involvement of BVS member Delegate Chris Stolle. Chairman Kaiserman noted the involvement of Delegates Kirk Cox and Riley Ingram in identifying the state resources necessary for care center construction.

In response to questions about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding priority list, Commissioner Galanti, Deputy Commissioner Wilson, and Mr. Combs responded that DVS had been told by the VA that the VA funding pool was not sufficient to fund new construction projects in 2014. It was noted that Virginia ranked high in priority for new construction, but lower on the overall list. This is because, by federal code, life-safety, renovation, and bed replacement projects are ranked ahead of new construction projects.

In response to questions about that state funding commitment, Commissioner Galanti, Deputy Commissioner Wilson, and Mr. Combs responded that Virginia's commitment of 35% funding was in place.

Mr. Harold Barton stated that he thought it was very important for the JLC to keep this issue at the forefront to ensure continued state support for the Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia projects and the continued commitment of state funding to match the federal grant funds, when such funds become available.

Chairman Kaiserman thanked Deputy Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Combs, Mr. Jack Hilgers, Mr. Jon Hatfield, and Ms. Danielle Weaver for all of their hard work in support of the JLC.

Board of Veterans Services

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Thad Jones delivered the BVS report (see *Attachment 3*). Chairman Kaiserman thanked Mr. Jones for his report.

Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Rich Schollmann gave the VSF report (see *Attachment 4*). Chairman Kaiserman thanked Mr. Schollmann for his report.

Virginia Military Advisory Council

Vice Chairman Moran stated that the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) met on June 26 and that he was very impressed by the leadership of Secretary Harvey, who chairs the VMAC. He noted that he could provide a detailed report after the VMAC meeting minutes are distributed.

JLC Constitution and ByLaws Committee

Committee Chairman Pete Fairchild stated that the Committee had reviewed the JLC Constitution and ByLaws and had no recommended changes to present at this time. He noted that the Committee intended to propose a change for consideration at the October 15 meeting. He said that the Committee would propose procedures on how the JLC would conduct business in the case that the Chairman or Vice Chairman were not present. He outlined a process where the DVS Commissioner would call the meeting to order, and an Acting Chairman would be elected by a quorum of members present for the meeting. Mr. Fairchild stated that the proposed changes would be distributed electronically at least 30 days prior to the October 15 meeting, at which the changes would be reviewed and voted on.

JLC Nominating Committee

Committee Chairman Carmen Gentile stated that the Committee had received one nomination each for Chairman and Vice Chairman: Mr. Moran to be Chairman and Mr. Reistad to be Vice Chairman. Mr. Gentile said that the Committee had reviewed the qualifications of each and that both were qualified for the positions for which they had been nominated and that each had the Committee's recommendation.

Chairman Kaiserman called for a break at 10:50 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11 a.m.

Commissioner Galanti departed during the break. DVS was represented by Deputy Commissioner Wilson for the remainder of the meeting.

Remembrance and moment of silence

JLC Chaplain Mr. George Corbett spoke in honor and remembrance of former JLC member Tom Richards, who passed away on June 18, 2014. Mr. Corbett asked for a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Richards. Mr. Rich Rinaldo also spoke in memory of Mr. Richards and related a humorous anecdote about Mr. Richards.

Review, discuss, adopt, and prioritize JLC 2015 Initiatives

Mr. Reistad, JLC Legislative Officer, stated that seven proposed initiatives had been submitted for consideration by the JLC as 2015 initiatives, that position papers for the seven proposed initiatives were included in the agenda packet, and that a summary sheet was included to inform the discussion. The seven proposed position papers are included as Attachment 5 (labeled as Proposals 1 – 7).

Mr. Reistad called on, in turn, Mr. Stu Williams, Mr. Tom Gimble, Mr. Abe Zino, and Vice Chairman Chip Moran, to review the proposals made by their veterans service organization (VSO). Each presented the position papers that had been submitted by their VSO and answered questions from the other Council members. Several “friendly amendments/suggestions” were made, which the JLC sponsors agreed to make if the proposals were adopted by the JLC.

Mr. Harold Barton proposed one additional initiative (labeled as Proposal 8), that the JLC adopt a 2015 initiative calling for the Governor and General Assembly to continue to certify the availability of state matching funds (35% of project costs) for the planned veterans care centers in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia. Mr. Barton said that, if the proposal were adopted, he would write a short position paper and submit it to the JLC.

A summary of the eight proposals; the motions, seconds, and votes on each proposal; and the motions, seconds, and votes to prioritize the adopted initiatives, are recorded in a table as Attachment 6.

The JLC voted to unanimously adopt the following prioritized initiatives for 2015:

1. Hiring and retention of DVS Benefit Services Agents;
2. Funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program;
3. Virginia War Memorial;
4. Advancing the Virginia Homeless Veterans Program;
5. Alternate Revenue Sources for Veterans Programs;
6. Veterans Care Centers (Hampton and Northern Virginia).

JLC Position Papers will be written for each initiative and submitted to the Governor through the Department of Veterans Services and the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs.

New business and open discussion

Chairman Kaiserman made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Tom Gimble, that JLC members who intend to approach a member of the executive or legislative or executive branch with a non-JLC

legislative or budget proposal inform DVS prior to the meeting, so that DVS is informed and may offer guidance. Chairman Kaiserman noted that this was important in light of the expanded powers given to the JLC to advise DVS and the General Assembly on veterans issues. He emphasized that it was not his intent to restrict the actions of the JLC members or the VSOs they represent in any way, but rather to promote effective communication and coordination of veterans issues.

Discussion followed, with several members asking for additional information. Chairman Kaiserman added that the intent of informing DVS is not for DVS to restrict in any way the JLC members' actions when speaking with a member of the executive or legislative branch about a personal or VSO issue, but simply to keep DVS informed and allow DVS to offer advice. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Mr. Harold Barton noted that this change to JLC operating procedure should be considered for inclusion in the JLC ByLaws. Mr. Pete Fairchild, Chairman of the JLC Constitution & ByLaws Committee, agreed to take this for action.

Chairman Kaiserman opened the floor to new business and opened discussion.

Mr. Stu Williams discussed the legislation passed by the 2014 General Assembly regarding the electronic return of voted ballots by military service members. He noted that the legislation called for the State Board of Elections (SBE) to form a working group, and stated that he thought it critical that the JLC and the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs (SVDA) be represented on the working group. Mr. Williams made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. McCroskey, that the JLC send a letter to Secretary Harvey requesting that he advocate for JLC and SVDA representation on the SBE working group. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Mr. Williams said that the MOAA Virginia Council of Chapters was preparing a white paper on restructuring the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and that the paper would be shared with the JLC at a later date.

Mr. Harold Barton requested that there be a presentation at the October 15 meeting on the promulgation of rules and regulations by DVS related to the real estate tax exemption for 100% service-connected disabled veterans, and that the Chairman convey this request to DVS. Chairman Kaiserman agreed to both.

Mr. Barton noted that the Hampton court system had received \$200,000 through the Supreme Court to for special judicial procedures for veterans. He said that this was a significant step in moving this program forward and that JLC members advocating for the creation of similar procedures in other jurisdictions should be encouraged by this result.

Mr. Rich Rinaldo asked for confirmation that there would be a presentation on G.I. Bill and student veterans issues at the October 15 meeting. Chairman Kaiserman confirmed there would be and noted that the intent of the presentation is for the JLC to become more familiar with G.I. Bill and student veterans programs and issues.

Chairman Kaiserman noted that the JLC and BVS had met with previous Governors to review budget and legislative proposals. He asked that DVS request a meeting with Governor McAuliffe as soon as possible to present the JLC and BVS 2015 Initiatives to the Governor for his consideration as part of his legislative and budget package for the 2015 General Assembly. Deputy Commissioner Wilson and Mr. Combs agreed to assist with requesting this meeting. It was also recognized that Ms. Leslie Frazier of the Secretary's office was at the meeting and could help with this request.

Elections

Chairman Kaiserman reviewed the report of Nominating Committee: that Mr. Moran had been nominated for Chairman and Mr. Reistad had been nominated for Vice Chairman, that both were qualified, and that both had the Committee's recommendation.

Chairman Kaiserman asked if there were any further nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Mr. Gimble made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Robert Huffman, to close nominations. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Mr. Barton made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Gimble, to accept the report of the Nominating Committee. The **motion** carried **unanimously**, and Mr. Moran was elected as JLC Chairman for 2014-2015 and Mr. Reistad as JLC Vice Chairman for 2014-2015.

Public Comment

Mr. Bill Ashton stated that he will continue to advocate for legislation to change the eligibility requirements for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). He said that when he spoke with legislators last year, they asked him if the proposal was supported by the JLC. Mr. Ashton asked how, in light of today's JLC action, he should reply if asked.

Mr. Reistad responded that Mr. Ashton should tell legislators that the issue was not adopted by the JLC as one of its 2015 Initiatives. Mr. Ashton thanked Mr. Reistad for his answer.

Closing Remarks and Preparation for Next Meeting

Chairman Kaiserman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their outstanding support during his tenure as JLC Chairman. He said that the next meeting JLC is scheduled for October 15, 2014 at the American Legion Building, but there were several items, noted in the JLC 2014 Action Plan, that must occur in the next few weeks.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, Chairman Kaiserman called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Abe Zino made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Gentile, to adjourn. The **motion** carried **unanimously** and the meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m. A lunch was served after the meeting.

ATTACHMENT 1

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
American Legion Building
1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond
July 16, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, approval of agenda and introduction of guests – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. Approve May 12, 2014 meeting minutes – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Reports (10:15 – 10:50)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Rich Schollmann, VSF Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - c. Virginia Military Advisory Council – *Chip Moran, JLC Representative* (5 minutes)
 - d. Department of Veterans Services – *Paul Galanti, Commissioner* (10 minutes)
 - e. JLC Constitution & By Laws Committee – *Pete Fairchild, Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - f. Nominating Committee – *Carmen Gentile, Chairman* (5 minutes)

BREAK (10:50 – 11:00)

- V. Review, discuss, adopt, and prioritize JLC 2015 Initiatives– *Brett Reistad, Legislative Officer* (11:00 – 12:00)
- VI. New business and open discussion – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (12:00 – 12:10)
- VII. Elections – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (12:10 – 12:15)
- VIII. Public comment period (12:15 – 12:20)
- IX. Closing remarks and preparation for next meeting – *Don Kaiserman, JLC Chairman* (12:20 – 12:30)
- X. Adjourn (12:30)

Lunch will be served following the meeting

ATTACHMENT 2

Memorandum for: Chairman Don Kaiserman
Members, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

From: Paul Galanti, Commissioner

Date: July 16, 2014

Subject: Department of Veterans Services report

Some of the recent items of note for the Department of Veterans Services (DVS):

- Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP):
 - The June 9, 2014 state-wide Homeless Veteran Summit convened high-level decision makers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), state agencies, Continuums of Care (CoCs), veteran service organizations, and non-profit and private groups to develop a coordinated plan to end veteran homelessness in Virginia.
 - Over 170 people attended the summit, which was hosted in collaboration with the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and VA VISN 6.
 - The summit provided best practices in housing first, rapid re-housing, targeting of resources, data sharing, access to behavioral and mental health, and employment services.
 - VWWP received a Highly Rural Transportation Grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the amount of \$8,825 to implement the Highland County Veterans Transportation Program (grant period June 30, 2014 – June 29, 2015).
- Veterans care centers:
 - Construction continues on the 40-bed addition to the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC). Completion is expected in late 2014 with the first new residents expected to be admitted in early 2015;
 - SBVCC was awarded a 2014 Bronze National Quality Award by the American Healthcare Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) for SBVCC's dedication to improving the lives of residents through commitment to quality care.
 - Work began June 2 on the new patient elopement system at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC). The new system is funded in part through a federal grant.
- Veterans cemeteries:
 - 1,465 veterans and eligible dependents were interred at state veterans cemeteries in Fiscal Year 2014:
 - Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk): 1,018 interments;
 - Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia): 307 interments;
 - Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin): 140 interments.
 - As of June 30, 2014, a total of 10,674 veterans and spouses have been interred.

- All work is now finished on the *Avenue of Flags* project at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin). Equipment is in place for an *Avenue of Flags* at all three state veterans cemeteries. American Flags are flown on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, and on special occasions
- Virginia War Memorial
 - Over 2,000 people attended the Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony on May 26. The inspirational tribute, held in the Heilman Amphitheater, was dedicated to the proposition that Freedom is Never Free.
 - An estimated 3,000 people viewed the *RVA Fireworks on the James* from the Virginia War Memorial on July 5. The Memorial was open extended hours.
 - Design work continues on the 19,500 square foot addition to the Virginia War Memorial. Construction is tentatively scheduled to be complete in Fall 2016.
- Veterans Education, Training and Employment (VETE):
 - VETE is collaborating with the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) to conduct a study, funded by the National Science Foundation, on the perceptions of GI Bill participants of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields as a viable career option.
 - Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program: the second annual V3 summit is scheduled for August 28. Invitations will be sent to all JLC members.

Thank you for your stellar support of the Department of Veterans Services and our programs and services. We look forward to our continued partnership.

ATTACHMENT 3

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (JLC) OF VETERANS SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS July 16, 2014

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on May 13 and will meet next on Tuesday, July 22.

Two new BVS members were appointed to the Board by Governor McAuliffe: Ms. Susan Hippen and Mr. Jim Icenhour. They replace Ms. Kate Kohler and Mr. J. Patrick Murray. BVS members William Haneke and Donald Kaiserman were reappointed by Governor McAuliffe to four-year terms.

Elections for Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary will be held at the July 22 meeting. Following the meeting, the new Chairman will appoint the Chairs and members of the Board's three standing committees – Benefits, Care Centers, and Cemeteries.

As I conclude my 4+ years as Chairman of the BVS, I look back on all that we have accomplished together in service to Virginia's veterans. I know I speak for all of the Board when I say how much we look forward to our continued partnership with the JLC.

Respectfully submitted,

Thad A. Jones
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 4

VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION REPORT TO Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations July 16, 2014

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has not held any meetings since last JLC meeting. The VSF Report to the JLC on 21 May remains valid. The end of FY14 VSF Financial Report is not as yet available.

The Board has gained two new members appointed by the Governor on 20 June. One is John Lesinski who is Senior Vice President at Colliers International and is a retired Marine Colonel. The other is Matice Wright who is an independent Consultant and Entrepreneur and is a retired Naval Flight Officer. They are replacing Peter Trainer and Juanita Farrow who will remain on the Board as advisors to the Development Committee.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2014 at the Virginia War Memorial. There will be Development and Finance Committee meetings prior to the Board meeting. Items for the next meeting may include: (1) approval of the Final Quarter FY14 Financial Statement; (2) approval of the review and updates of VSF-DVS Joint Policies #1, 2, 3 and 4; (3) refine a new policy on charitable bequests/planned giving; (4) review VSF FY14 fundraising program and projections for FY15; and (5) appointment of committee chairs for FY15.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Schollmann
VSF Chairman

ATTACHMENT 5 – PROPOSED POSITION PAPERS

NOTE: The Position Papers are numbered and listed in the order in which they were submitted.

SUMMARY

Number (in order submitted)	VSO Sponsor	Proposal Title/Subject
1	MOAA	Hiring and Retention of Benefit Services Agents
2	MOAA	Funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program
3	MOAA	Measure if Virginia Veterans are Being Properly Served
4	MOAA	Advancing the Virginia Homeless Veterans Program
5	VFW	Alternate Revenue Sources for Veterans Programs
6	FRA	Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program
7	NAUS	Virginia War Memorial
8	AFA	Veterans Care Centers (NOTE: no position paper submitted)

PROPOSAL NUMBER 1

VSO Sponsor: MOAA

Subject: Hiring and Retention of Benefit Services Agents

1. **OBJECTIVE:**

Provide funds to allow competitive compensation levels within existing authorities to hire and retain Department of Veterans Services claims agents in high cost of living areas of Virginia. This is to facilitate assurance and consistency in the timely preparation and submission of accurate veterans claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

- a. Veterans are entitled to disability compensation from the federal government for injuries or illnesses resulting from military service. To obtain this compensation, Veterans must file claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).
- b. Filing a claim is a long, complex process – most Veterans seek assistance to file a claim.
- c. To assist Virginia Veterans, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) operates 22 Benefits Field Offices that provide free assistance to Virginia Veterans in developing and filing claims for compensation and pension benefits with the USDVA.
- d. Virginia receives a considerable return on investment for helping Virginia Veterans. In FY10, DVS filed 26,431 claims on behalf of Virginia Veterans, resulting in an estimated \$122 million in new disability compensation payments. In FY11 the number of claims increased to 28,541 with an estimated fiscal impact of \$154 million.
- e. DVS Benefit Field Offices are staffed by trained claims agents, particularly in using the automatic claims processing system, who provide direct, one-on-one assistance to veterans in developing and filing claims with the USDVA.
- f. Knowledgeable trained and experienced claims agents are in high demand and many DVS agents leave for higher paying jobs that DVS cannot match.
- g. DVS has had a 70 percent claims agent turnover during the past five years.
- h. DVS does not have the authority and financial resources to retain trained and experienced claims agents by being able to offer them competitive salaries based on their operational base.

3. **DISCUSSION:**

The solution is to provide sufficient funding so that DVS can offer competitive salaries within existing authority based on each agent's operational base.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Governor and General Assembly support funds to provide competitive compensation for DVS claims agents in an amendment to the 2016 budget.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 2

VSO Sponsor: MOAA

Subject: Funding for Virginia Wounded Warrior Program

1. Objective: Provide funding to ensure that veterans and their families especially those affected by stress related conditions and traumatic brain injuries have access to a network of community-based services for healthcare, behavioral healthcare, rehabilitative services and other critical support.

2. Background:

- a. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) was established in law¹ by the 2008 Virginia General Assembly to ensure that services to veterans and their families are readily available in all areas of the Commonwealth. It is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in cooperation with the Virginia Departments of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Benefitting from the support of the Governor and his Cabinet Secretaries for Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security, Health and Human Resources, and Public Safety, the VWWP is guided by a state-level Interagency Executive Strategy Committee that comprises the agency heads of many of the health and human services agencies, the Adjutant General of the Virginia National Guard, and the Director of the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN 6) that serves Virginia. The program monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and support services for veterans and their families and addresses a myriad of health and wellness issues such as housing, financial assistance, employment, primary healthcare and other community services.
- b. Virginia is home to approximately 837,000 veterans and is expected to grow to 850,000 in 2017. Included in this population are over 300,000 who served since September 11, 2001. The Virginia National Guard and Reserve components have been called upon as never before to deploy to combat zones.
- c. The challenges of the current conflicts are enormous. Data indicate that 38% of Soldiers and 31% of Marines report psychological symptoms. Among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. Psychological symptoms are significantly higher among those with repeated deployments.
- d. Funding for the VWWP comes from the General Fund, private donations through the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation and grants.

3. Discussion:

- a. Virginia should do everything in its power to attend to those who have been defending our liberties and who may need services and community support because of stress related injuries and/or traumatic brain injuries resulting from military service.
- b. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program's vision for the future is "*Enhancing the quality of life for Virginia's veterans, service members and their families.*" This simple yet powerful statement is intended to provide guidance for the continued success and expansion of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, ensuring that the on-going focus is always Virginia's

¹ §2.2-2001.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

service members, veterans and families who have sacrificed their personal safety and needs to ensure freedom and liberty for all.

- c. In FY 2012 VWWP increased by 220% the number of veterans and family members served (from 1650 to 5283) since it first started serving veterans and families in Virginia's communities in FY 2010. The success of the program ensures that demand for services will continue to rise, especially as the population of service members from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families return from deployment and renew their daily lives, employment, activities and community participation. It is expected that the impact of the wars will continue to be felt for decades, just as previous wars have affected the health and well being of service members and their families. It is critical that the Commonwealth continue to recognize and address these concerns.

4. Recommendation: That the JLC recommend continued and increased funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program as a priority in the development and approval of amendments to the 2016 budget.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 3

VSO Sponsor: MOAA

Subject: Measure if Virginia Veterans are Being Properly Served

1. Objective: Provide funding in the amendments to the 2016 budget to commission an update to the 2010 Virginia Tech report “*Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of Veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia*” to measure progress in access to health care, behavioral healthcare and supportive community services, including employment, housing and financial assistance, for veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves not in active federal service and their families in the Commonwealth.

2. Background:

- a. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) was established in law² by the 2008 Virginia General Assembly to ensure that services to veterans and their families are readily available in all areas of the Commonwealth. It is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in cooperation with the Virginia Departments of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Benefitting from the support of the Governor and his Cabinet Secretaries for Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security, Health and Human Resources, and Public Safety, the VWWP is guided by a state-level Interagency Executive Strategy Committee that comprises the agency heads of many of the health and human services agencies, the Adjutant General of the Virginia National Guard, and the Director of the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN 6) that serves Virginia. The program monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and support services for veterans and their families and addresses a myriad of health and wellness issues such as housing, financial assistance, employment, primary healthcare and other community services.
- b. Virginia is home to approximately 837,000 veterans and is expected to grow to 850,000 in 2017. Included in this population are over 300,000 who served since September 11, 2001. The Virginia National Guard and Reserve components have been called upon as never before to deploy to combat zones.
- c. The challenges of the current conflicts are enormous. Data indicate that 38% of Soldiers and 31% of Marines report psychological symptoms. Among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. Psychological symptoms are significantly higher among those with repeated deployments.
- d. To determine the target populations and its needs VWWP contracted for a study with the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) in 2009. The VTIPG study assessed the current service experiences (consumer satisfaction), emerging and unserved needs and service gaps within the range of veteran’s services available in the Commonwealth of Virginia. While all veteran experiences and needs were assessed, particular consideration was given to the behavioral health and traumatic brain injury service needs of the veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This study served as the foundation for confirming the infrastructure of the VWWP, and has been instrumental in accessing funds through grant approval.

² §2.2-2001.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

3. Discussion: Continued evolution and support of the VWWP would be enhanced by measuring the needs of the current veterans population and those of their families and the measurement of progress achieved in addressing those needs. The updated Needs Assessment will provide critical demographic data for continual quality and process improvement of the VWWP and its partner agencies and organizations.

4. Recommendation: That the JLC promote funding in amendments to the 2016 budget to commission an update to the 2010 Virginia Tech report “*Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of Veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia*” to measure progress in access to health care, behavioral healthcare and supportive community services, including employment, housing and financial assistance, for veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves not in active federal service and their families in the Commonwealth.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 4

VSO Sponsor: MOAA

Subject: Advancing the Virginia Homeless Veterans Program

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To sustain an effective program to eliminate homelessness within our Virginia Veterans population.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. Homelessness within the Virginia Veterans population has been a long-term issue predating the War in Vietnam. JLARC completed a significant study in June 2010 documenting a baseline size and nature of issue. That study also stated that significant long-term funding and a dedicated program would be required to solve the problem.
 - b. The General Assembly previously approved two positions within the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to plan and coordinate an intensive program to dramatically reduce homelessness among veterans and their families. Staff in these positions has been active in coordinating solutions.
 - c. Since 2011, veteran homelessness has dropped 34 percent. From 2013-2014, veteran homelessness in Virginia has dropped 14 percent. Overall homelessness in Virginia has decreased during this same period as a result of coordinated actions within the Commonwealth. Agencies involved include the Departments of Veterans Services, Housing and Community Development, and Health and Human Resources.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - a. The state-level Homeless Outcomes Coordinating Council (HOCC), co-chaired by Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones and Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel, recently approved action steps to improve targeting of resources, coordination of services, and increased sharing of data towards the goal of ending veteran homelessness. A veteran sub-committee, co-chaired by the DVS Director of Housing Development, is responsible for implementation and monitoring the progress of these action steps.
 - b. In June 2014, Governor McAuliffe became the 4th Governor to sign the National Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; sending a clear message that ending veteran homelessness is a priority for the Commonwealth.
 - c. VWWP Housing Resource Specialists (HRS) provide outreach and care coordination to homeless veterans in Hampton Roads and Richmond. These positions have been successful in reaching high barrier, chronically homeless veterans and connecting them to both VA and mainstream housing and supportive services.
 - d. As noted in the JLARC Study on Veteran Homelessness, barriers of housing and income need to be addressed for veteran ex-offenders, particularly those exiting correctional institutions. Access and coordination of resources for this population need to be improved
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor and the General Assembly approve adequate funding in amendments to the FY 2016 Budget to further reduce homelessness among veterans by providing additional funding for:
 - a. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to support increases in general statewide homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive

housing funding that could assist those veterans in rural areas and/or veterans ineligible for VA services.

- b. DHCD for development of a statewide homeless data warehouse system to permit a better understanding of the needs of veterans accessing mainstream homeless services.
- c. DVS to add three new Housing Resource Specialists (HRS) positions in order to expand coverage to Roanoke and Northern Virginia, and to add a second HRS position in Hampton Roads.
- d. DVS to add one position to support increasing the coordination with the criminal justice system to provide statewide coordination of federal, state, and community resources.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 5

VSO Sponsor: VFW

Subject: Alternate Revenue Sources for Veterans Programs

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Provide some of the resources required to implement the Compact with Virginia's Veterans by creating alternate revenue sources for veterans programs.

2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - The cost of taking care of our veterans has increased significantly in the past decade. In times of austere budgets it seems that an alternate source of funding may be needed to ensure that the many important Veterans programs receive adequate funding.
 - Over the foreseeable future the cost of veterans programs (e.g. Virginia Wounded Warrior Program needs, cemetery maintenance, care center operations, Virginia War Memorial operations, and benefits services) will continue to increase.
 - The Governor and the General Assembly have and continue to identify important veterans' programs that are supported by the General Fund. However, during the austere budget challenges currently faced by the Commonwealth additional actions may be needed to ensure adequate funding for issues such as:
 - Hiring and retention of DVS Claims Agents to process Veteran's disability claims.
 - Funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program
 - Reducing homelessness for the Virginia veterans
 - Funding needed to update the 2010 Virginia Tech Study "*Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of the Veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia*"
 - Funding for the Virginia War Memorial operations
 - Legislation enacted in 2010 established a Compact with Virginia's Veterans, with a goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state. New or expanded programs and services implemented under the Compact for veterans and their families (e.g. homeless assistance, employment, education, etc.) require additional resources. While much progress has been made, more remains to be done.

3. **DISCUSSION:** Veterans' service programs need a major, non-general fund "funding stream." It must be large enough to have a significant impact on needed veterans' programs that would otherwise require general fund monies or go unfunded
 - Lotteries have been proven to provide a suitable and sustainable source of revenue.
 - Seven states (Texas, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, West Virginia, and New Jersey) have a dedicated revenue stream for veterans programs through the state lottery two more states (Missouri and Vermont) are working to create a Veteran's lottery:
 - Texas, Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois have each raised between \$10 million and \$33 million for veterans since allocating a portion of lottery revenues to veterans services and programs. These states have been successful in designing a lottery that does not detract from funds dedicated to education or other purposes;
 - Rather than cut into a share of the "pie", they have been able to "grow the pie."

- The proceeds from the Virginia lottery are dedicated to education and so protected by the state constitution. However, some proceeds can go to other uses if approved by 4/5 of the members of the General Assembly.
 - No other group in America has been called on to bear the burdens and to make the sacrifices that our veterans have. Therefore, the benefits that Veterans have earned through sacrifice and service deserve to be adequately funded.
4. RECOMMENDATION: That the General Assembly and the Governor approve the establishment of a veterans' lottery as part of the Compact with Virginia's Veterans to supplement the General Fund's support of approved Veteran's requirements with any residual lottery funding reverting back to Education.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 6

VSO Sponsor: Fleet Reserve Association

Subject: Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program

1. **Objective:** To change the eligibility to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).

2. **Background:**

- The VMSDEP, formally known as the War Orphans Education Program, provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became at least 90 percent disabled as a result of military service in an armed conflict.
- Military service includes service in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or the Virginia National Guard Reserves. Armed conflict includes military operations against terrorism or as the result of a terrorist act, a peace-keeping mission, or any armed conflict after December 6, 1941.
- Under VMSDEP, tuition and required fees are waived.
- Students may also receive a stipend – currently capped at \$1,500 per year – toward room, board, books, and supplies. The amount of the stipend is dependent on the amount of annual state funding for the program (currently \$1,250,000 per year), the number of enrolled students, and enrollment status.
- Benefits are available for up to four years or the equivalent.

3. **Discussion:**

- **Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program; eligibility.** Extends the benefits of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to the spouse or child of a veteran with at least a 90 percent permanent, service-related disability. Under current law, the spouse or child would be eligible for benefits only if the veteran's disability was incurred during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict.

The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) estimates an additional 415 students per year will qualify for tuition and fee waivers as a result of this legislation. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and DVS have estimated that this legislation would result in a system-wide loss of tuition revenue of about \$2,182,454 in fiscal year 2015 and \$2,520,734 in fiscal year 2016. This is a potentially significant fiscal impact on higher education institutions, and additional general fund support may be appropriate to offset this loss of revenue.

There are two other programs funded by the commonwealth, one is the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program and the other is Virginia Community College Tuition Grant for Foster Care. These two programs allow funding from the Commonwealth budget for college students. Below is a quick summary of the programs. Unfortunately I cannot find the line item for the funding of these programs in the budget, but these two programs could potentially offset the cost of the change I'm requesting.

Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program - currently at 3100.00 per year - In 1972, the Commonwealth of Virginia created VTAG as a way to assist residents who attend accredited private, non-profit colleges and universities in Virginia (currently 31). VTAG is a non-need based grant and is available to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Virginia Community College Tuition Grant for Foster Care - Anyone certified to be in foster care, in the custody of a social service agency, a special needs adoption at the time they received their high school diploma or GED, or was formerly in foster care when turning 18 and subsequently earned a high school diploma or GED, is eligible as long as he or she:

- Enrolls in and maintains at least half-time enrollment (with a minimum of six credits) in an eligible academic program of at least one academic year in length
- Is a bona-fide domiciliary resident of Virginia as promulgated under Section 23-7.4 of the Code of Virginia
- Meets satisfactory academic standards of the college for federal student financial aid programs
- Has not been previously enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution for more than five years and does not have a bachelor's degree, and
- demonstrates financial need.

4. Recommendation:

1. That the Governor and General Assembly should change the eligibility requirement for Veterans who are rated 90% disable by the Veterans Administration vice veteran's disability was incurred during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict.
2. The above programs could potentially offset the increased cost of the program.

PROPOSAL NUMBER 7

VSO Sponsor: National Association for Uniformed Services

Subject: Virginia War Memorial

1. **Objective:** To ensure that the Virginia War Memorial (the Memorial) has the personnel and financial resources necessary to operate the premier state-level memorial in the nation and accomplish its Code-mandated mission.

2. **Background:**
 - a. Per § 2.2-2001.3(B) of the Code of Virginia: *“The mission of the Virginia War Memorial shall be to honor patriotic Virginians who rendered faithful service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom and liberty for the Commonwealth and the nation in time of war, honor all of Virginia’s veterans, preserve their history, educate the public, and inspire patriotism in all Virginians.”*
 - b. The Memorial has developed and implemented new and/or expanded programs and services to accomplish this mission.
 - c. The number of visitors increased from 19,000 in 2010 to over 60,000 in 2013, is expected to top 70,000 in 2014, and could grow to over 100,000 visitors per year.
 - d. The Governor and General Assembly have approved the construction of a 19,500 square foot expansion of the Memorial, expected to be complete in Fall 2016, to house the expanded programs and services and to accommodate the increasing number of visitors.
 - e. At its September 20, 2013 meeting, the Virginia War Memorial Board adopted a resolution outlining the five new positions needed in Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 to support Memorial operations, programs, and services. The positions are: Assistant Director, Facilities Manager, Assistant Curator, Administrative Assistant, and Video Tele-training Studio/Classroom (VTT) Instructor.

3. **Discussion:**
 - a. The Virginia War Memorial is the premier state-level memorial in the nation.
 - b. The Memorial has developed and implemented new and/or expanded programs and services to accomplish its Code-mandated mission. As a result, the numbers of visitors to the Memorial has grown and will continue to grow.
 - c. A 19,500 square foot addition will be built.
 - d. Additional personnel and the associated funding are required to deliver effective programs and services and to accommodate the growth in the number of visitors.

4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly authorize five additional positions for the Virginia War Memorial and appropriate the necessary funding for these positions.

ATTACHMENT 6: PROPOSED JLC 2015 INITIATIVES – SUMMARY SHEET

Proposal Number (in order submitted)			Vote on the Proposal			Vote on the JLC Priority		
Proposal Number (in order submitted)	VSO Sponsor	Proposal Title/Subject	Motion	Second	JLC Vote	Motion	Second	Adopted JLC Priority
1	MOAA	Hiring and Retention of Benefit Services Agents	by Chip Moran to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by Abe Zino	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #1	by Pete Fairchild	1
2	MOAA	Funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program	by Pete Fairchild to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by Rich Rinaldo	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #2	by Pete Fairchild	2
3	MOAA	Measure if Virginia Veterans are Being Properly Served	by Stu Williams to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative Substitute motion by Rich Mansfield to table to October meeting	Stu William's motion by Rich Rinaldo Rich Mansfield's motion by Abe Zino	Table to October meeting	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	MOAA	Advancing the Virginia Homeless Veterans Program	by Don Kaiserman to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by Chip Moran	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #4	by Pete Fairchild	4
5	VFW	Alternate Revenue Sources for Veterans Programs	by Tom Gimble to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by James Clem	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #5	by Pete Fairchild	5
6	FRA	Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program	None	N/A	Failed due to lack of motion	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	NAUS	Virginia War Memorial	by Tom Gimble to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by George Corbett	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #3	by Pete Fairchild	3
8	AFA	Veterans Care Centers	by Harold Barton to adopt as JLC 2015 Initiative	by Tom Gimble	Unanimous to Adopt	by John Prendergast as #6	by Pete Fairchild	6