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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

*Air Force Association
American Ex-Prisoners
of War
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve
Association
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
MOAA
Military Order of the
World Wars
NAUS
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers
Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Virginia National Guard
Association
WAVES
Women Marines
Association*

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 28, 2009

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Veterans score four victories during 2009 General Assembly Session

RICHMOND—The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) recommended six legislative initiatives during this year's General Assembly and came away with four victories. The JLC is comprised of representatives from 23 veterans service organizations, such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. These organizations have more than 250,000 members in Virginia.

The JLC 2009 Legislative Objectives which passed include:

- Development of an automated system for preparation of veterans disability claims—HB1732, sponsored by Delegate Kirk Cox.
- Support for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children—HB1727, carried by Delegate Mark Cole.
- Initiation of a study on serving homeless veterans. Delegate Cox requested that the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission of the General Assembly complete this study by June 30, 2010.
- Real estate tax relief for 100% service connected disabled veterans—SJ275, sponsored by Senators Puller, Reynolds, and Stuart, and HJ648, sponsored by Delegates O'Bannon and Janis.

The two resolutions on real estate tax relief for disabled veterans are the first step toward amending the Virginia Constitution to provide

tax relief for veterans who have a 100 percent service-connected disability. The resolutions must be approved again by the 2010 General Assembly and then put before voters in November 2010. The amendment to the Constitution will take effect only if the resolutions pass the 2010 General Assembly and are approved by voters in November 2010. A constitutional amendment is required because this exemption creates a special class of exemptions.

The two JLC objectives that did not pass were:

- Provision of burial vaults at state veterans cemeteries. In the current budget environment, no funding was provided, so SB1512, carried by Senator Edwards, did not pass. If passed, the bill would allow the Department of Veterans Services to provide veterans with burial vaults at no cost to the veterans or their families.
- Making grants from the Military Family Relief Fund exempt from state taxes, as proposed in HB2414, carried by Delegate Bouchard, and HB2512, carried by Delegate Marsden.

“I’d like to thank Governor Kaine and all 140 members of the General Assembly for their continued support of Virginia’s veterans, active duty service members, Guardsmen, Reservists, and family members,” said JLC Chairman Dan Boyer. “The JLC is honored to be the voice of Virginia’s 814,000 veterans, and we are also proud to advocate for the 125,000 service members who call the Commonwealth home. We’ve already begun work on a set of legislative and budget recommendations for the 2010 General Assembly session, and look forward to presenting them to the Governor and General Assembly in late summer.”

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