

Board of Veterans Services
DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held electronically on Wednesday, June 10, 2020.

Members Present

- Victor Angry
- Carl Bedell
- Carl Bess
- Paige Cherry
- Michael Dick
- Buddy Fowler
- Dan Helmer
- James Icenhour
- Thurraya Kent
- Lyla Kohistany
- John Lesinski
- Mamie Locke
- Kathleen Murphy
- Kathy Owens
- Frank Reyes
- Marcus Simon
- Julie Waters
- Frank G. Wickersham, III, Chairman, Joint Leadership Council
- Jack Hilgers, 1st Vice Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
- Linda Schreiner, Chair, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
- John Maxwell, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- John Cosgrove
- Tammi Lambert
- Bryce Reeves

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Carlos Hopkins, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Kathleen Jabs, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Nicole Anderson, Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS)
- Carol Berg, VDVS
- Steven Combs, VDVS
- Claudia Flores, VDVS
- Glendalynn Glover, VDVS

- Thomas Herthel, VDVS
- Scott Miller, VDVS
- Martina Murray, VDVS
- Brian Pickral, VDVS
- Susan Ulrich, VDVS
- Annie Walker, VDVS
- Karla Boughey, Veterans Services Foundation
- Brandi Jancaitis, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Chris Snider, Office of Senator Bryce Reeves

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet (sent via e-mail and posted on BVS webpage)

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the November 14, 2019, meeting
- VDVS Commissioner's Update
- BVS Powers & Duties (Code of Virginia)
- BVS By-Laws, effective January 1, 2020
- Proposed Changes to the BVS By-Laws
- Proposed BVS Points of Contact
- Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations report, with two attachments
- Veterans Services Foundation report
- Update on the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Families
- Overview of the VISR (Virginia Identify, Screen, and Refer) Pilot
- 2020 Meeting schedule

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., welcomed all attendees to the meeting and recognized Deputy Secretary Kathleen Jabs, who said that Secretary Carlos Hopkins would be joining later, but that she would represent the Secretariat for the entire meeting. Chairman Dick gave a brief overview of how the meeting would flow, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Dick emphasized that this was a particularly important time for the Board and its work. He highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic, the resultant severe economic turmoil, and the racial injustice challenges facing the nation. He called on the Board to keep in mind the long-term consequences that Board decisions can have on veterans policies and services, and asked that Board members make every effort to ensure they develop policy recommendations that recognize and address the complex social, economic, and political factors affecting veterans' issues today.

Roll Call and Quorum Determination

The roll was called and a quorum was determined with 20 of 24 members present. Mr. Paige Cherry noted later in the meeting that he had been present when the roll was called and had tried to reply, bringing the number of members present to 21.

Chairman Dick asked the new legislators to introduce themselves and say a few words. Delegate Buddy Fowler introduced himself and noted his prior service on the Virginia War Memorial Board.

Delegate Marcus Simon introduced himself and remarked on his service as a U.S. Army JAG officer.

Delegate Dan Helmer introduced himself and noted that he continues to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Senator Mamie Locke introduced herself and remarked that her father was a World War II veteran and that three of her brothers were Vietnam veterans.

Chairman Dick thanked the four new legislative members and welcomed them to the Board.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Mr. Jack Hilgers made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Kathleen Murphy, to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken, and **the motion carried by a vote of 21-0**. (The approved agenda is included as Attachment 1 to these minutes).

Approval of Minutes of the November 19, 2019 Meeting

Chairman Dick noted that he had received one proposed change to November 19, 2019, meeting minutes, and that the following item should be inserted into the minutes at the end of the legislator's pre-session reports:

Ms. Kathy Owens asked whether anyone was looking into the possible effects ratification of the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) might have on veterans issues, in particular the effect it might have on DVS women veterans' programs, and whether a legal opinion could be sought on the issues. The Chair responded that DVS would probably be the appropriate entity to handle the question, perhaps in consultation with the Secretariat and/or the Attorney General's Office. The Chair asked Acting Commissioner Combs to look into the matter and report back to the Board.

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2019, meeting with this change. Mr. James Icenhour made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Lesinski, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019, meeting as amended. There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken, and **the motion carried by a vote of 21-0**.

Introduction of DVS staff and guests

Chairman Michael Dick asked Mr. Steven Combs to introduce the DVS staff and guests. Their names are recorded above.

Remarks by DVS Commissioner John Maxwell and update on current DVS operational status

Chairman Dick introduced Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Commissioner John

Maxwell and encouraged the members to view his biography on the DVS website. Commissioner Maxwell noted that he only knows DVS in a COVID-19 environment. He noted that because DVS will not go back to a pre-COVID operating model, this would help him moving forward.

He discussed the planned return to an office operating environment and reviewed some of the challenges that DVS will face, such as employee health issues, in reopening offices. He remarked on the challenges that DVS and partners will face because of the strain on community resources. He also noted the challenges of a flat-line budget.

Commissioner Maxwell stated how impressed he was by the DVS team and the innovative ways the DVS team has responded to continue to deliver veterans services, noting in particular that the virtual Memorial Day ceremony had attracted 37,000 viewers. He said that DVS had held a virtual hiring fair and had one more planned, and that the upcoming 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Summit would be virtual.

He touched on the need to review DVS operations and break down stovepipes in operations, and highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has given DVS the opportunity to find new ways to tackle veterans services.

He noted DVS's commitment to serving veterans, how the value of DVS might be better recognized, and how DVS can become a more influential thought leader for veterans space in Virginia.

He touched on some of the challenges that Virginia faces, such as veterans homelessness, but noted that DVS was committed to working with partners to address these and other challenges. He remarked how excited DVS was to work with the Board on these and many issues.

Chairman Dick thanked the Commissioner, and noted that there would be an opportunity to hear more from Commissioner Maxwell later in the meeting regarding operating in a post-COVID-19 environment.

Mr. Frank Reyes asked Commissioner Maxwell about the part of his written report that referred to expanding DVS's digital footprint. Mr. Reyes asked how DVS intends to engage with veterans who are comfortable operating in a digital environment, and those who may not be as comfortable doing so.

Commissioner Maxwell noted that some veterans may not wish to engage with DVS digitally or who may prefer to interact with DVS in person. He said that when these veterans come to a DVS office, the agency will work with them to help them become more comfortable with technology. He also noted the possibility of partnering with VA medical centers to potentially make DVS offices a forum for veterans to connect to the VA for telehealth services. Finally, he gave the example of helping veterans to become more comfortable with using methods such as digital signatures.

Mr. Reyes and Chairman Dick thanked Chairman Maxwell. Chairman Dick added that no single

social media avenue will touch all veterans and that DVS will need to be on-line on multiple platforms to engage with veterans. Mr. Reyes also emphasized the continued/renewed need for communications through means such as newspapers and radio, and whether DVS resources could be directed towards these and other channels to enhance agency marketing efforts.

Chairman Dick reminded the members that information about the upcoming 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Summit was posted on the DVS website.

(Commissioner Maxwell's report is included as Attachment 2 to these minutes)

Preparation for August 20 meeting

Chairman Dick called the members' attention to the BVS Member Handbook, noting that it was posted on the BVS webpage and encouraging the members to review the handbook before the August 20 meeting.

Chairman Dick gave an overview of the Board's Powers and Duties, as outlined in the Code of Virginia. He underscored the need for the Board to have a diverse makeup, by geographic area, gender, and period of service.

He noted that the Board should focus first at the strategic level and make recommendations on the policies that the Commonwealth and DVS should adopt to serve Virginia's veterans and families. He touched on the need for the Board to review and provide input on the Department's strategic plan, and to apply a cost/benefit/value analysis to DVS on future projects. Finally, he noted the Board's duty to provide recommendations to DVS and VSF regarding gifts, grants, and other resources intended to support veterans services. He asked the members to remember the Board's duties and responsibilities as the members work with the focus area and/or workgroup.

BVS By-Laws/Proposed Changes

Chairman Dick noted that he had not received any comments regarding the proposed changes. He asked Mr. Combs if he had received any. Mr. Combs noted that he had not. Chairman Dick asked Mr. Combs to confirm that the proposed changes bring the ByLaws in line with the Code. Mr. Combs confirmed that this was the case, and that the proposed changes include a couple of things that should have been included or corrected the last time the ByLaws were changed (at the November 2019 meeting).

Chairman Dick noted that the Board's ByLaws are not static, and asked for a motion to approve the proposed revisions to the BVS By-Laws, as presented. Ms. Thurraya Kent made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Victor Angry, to approve the proposed revisions to the BVS By-Laws, as presented. There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken, and **the motion carried by a vote of 20-0**. (The revised BVS By-Laws, effective June 10, 2020, are included as Attachment 3 to these minutes).

BVS's role in shaping state veterans policy and priorities

Chairman Dick noted that it was important that the members have an understanding of how they can help shape veterans policy and priorities. He asked Mr. Combs to comment on some ways the Board and its members can do so.

Mr. Combs noted that there were many ways/opportunities for Board members to do so, both in its work with DVS but also with other boards, agencies, and entities. Mr. Combs noted that the Board's "Point of Contact" system allowed for regular interaction with the DVS Commissioner, directors, and program managers. He said that Board members asking questions and making suggestions was welcome. He said that the Board has links to both the Executive branch through DVS and the Secretary's office, but also to the Legislative Branch through the seven legislative members, designed to create cross-cutting links to state policy makers.

Mr. Combs noted that the Board could be instrumental on the Budget front, helping DVS with resource allocation and requests. He returned to the Board's duties regarding cost/benefit analysis of new programs or facilities and the impact the Board can have here. He noted that one of the Board's duties was to advise the Commissioner on the Department's Strategic Plan, and that this was an area where the Board and Board members could make a real impact. He concluded by recapping the many ways that the Board and Board members could engage across state government and with other entities to help shape state veterans policies.

Chairman Dick thanked Mr. Combs for the information, and commended the partnership that BVS has with the VSF and the JLC and ways that the boards can work together. He invited VSF Vice Chairman Jack Hilgers to comment. Mr. Hilgers noted it was important for the Board members to look for gaps in service, to question why things are done the way they are, especially if there might be a better way to do things, and to look for issues that should be addressed. He noted that this was something that the Board should focus on not only at meetings, but also on an ongoing basis.

JLC Chairman Frank Wickersham concurred with the previous comments, and noted that the JLC looks forward to continuing to work with the BVS on this issue.

Chairman Dick asked if any Board members or attendees wished to comment.

DVS Commissioner John Maxwell noted that the diversity of thought and experience represented on the Board and on everyone on the call is incredible, and that DVS team members won't see everything from all perspectives. He reiterated that DVS welcomes the input of the Board and its members, because the only way that DVS will continue to improve its services for veterans and families is to have input from multiple perspectives.

Deputy Secretary Kathleen Jabs stated that her office looks forward to working with the Board on making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Thinking ahead – operating in a (post) COVID-19 environment

Chairman Dick asked Mr. Combs about the August 20 meeting. Mr. Combs said that the interior portions of the Virginia War Memorial would reopen on June 29, and that, as of today, things were "a go" for an in-person meeting on August 20. He noted that the members would be more spread out due to social distancing, that the members may be required to wear masks, and that DVS would not be serving meals or drinks as at past meetings (members are encouraged to bring their own beverage). Mr. Combs noted that DVS was looking forward to showing the members

the expanded Virginia War Memorial.

Chairman Dick thanked Mr. Combs, and then asked Commissioner Maxwell whether he thought DVS would be in a “hybrid” operating environment for some time. Commissioner Maxwell stated that he did not see any way that DVS would ever return to its pre-COVID service delivery model, and that the way forward was a hybrid model combining virtual and in-person services.

Commissioner Maxwell noted that the initial phases of reopening would feature more remote services than in-person services, with the requirements for social distancing, PPE, etc. He noted the positive nature of this, as it opens up new channels of service and the potential to serve more veterans.

Chairman Dick thanked Commissioner Maxwell, and added that the Commissioner’s comments emphasize the need for the Board to be active and engaged in helping shape future DVS operations, and understanding how resource levels may impact DVS service capacity. He asked if any of the members wished to add anything before calling on Mr. John Lesinski.

Mr. Lesinski noted the critical need to reach rural veterans, their ability to access the internet, and how expansion of rural broadband will improve access to telehealth services and other veterans issues.

Chairman Dick asked Commissioner Maxwell about the development of metrics that would help the Board understand how critical aspects of veterans services are being addressed or not addressed.

Ms. Kathy Owens followed up on the Chair’s question and asked if there was a way to facilitate feedback from veterans who seek assistance from the DVS Benefits Services offices, if there was a way to develop a metric about the value the offices bring, and if there were opportunities for the Board to provide input on the types and ways services are offered. Chairman Dick asked if DVS could take a closer look at this issue and whether Commissioner Maxwell had any comments at present. The Commissioner noted that he has been conducting “virtual office visits” with Benefits Services offices, starting with the ones in Southwest Virginia. He said that he has heard about rural broadband issues from these visits, and that DVS welcomes feedback/engagement from the Board on this issue.

Chairman Dick asked the Board members, as they work in their areas, to look for metrics that may help BVS and DVS with this assessment.

Overview of BVS work group process and points of contact

Chairman Dick said that the BVS ByLaws and BVS Member Handbook provide an overview of the BVS Work Group and Points of Contact (POC) system. He stated that one of the duties of the Chairman is to appoint members as POCs, which he has done. He called the members’ attention to the list of POCs, noting that it was divided into three parts, corresponding to three upcoming BVS meetings, and that the POCs would be asked to provide a short overview at upcoming meetings on their area, items of interest or concern, and what the Board should be doing regarding policy issues in that area. The Chairman asked if there were any questions or

concerns. There were none. (The BVS Points of Contact, effective June 10, 2020, are included as Attachment 4 to these minutes).

Reports

Mr. Frank Wickersham, III, the Chairman of the **Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC)**, gave a short report. He noted that there were two attachments to the JLC report: a summary of the JLC 2020 Initiatives (three of six having been successfully acted on during the 2020 General Assembly session), and thanked Senator Reeves and Delegate Helmer for their support. Mr. Wickersham said that the JLC report also included a listing of the veterans- and military-related bills and budget items considered during the 2020 session. He thanked all of the legislators for their support on these issues. (The JLC report, with attachments, is included as Attachments 5, 5.a., and 5.b. to these minutes).

Mr. Jack Hilgers, the 1st Vice Chair of the **Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)**, gave a short report. Mr. Hilgers noted that the VSF held a virtual meeting on May 13, and while the June 24 meeting was originally scheduled to be held in-person, it too will be a virtual meeting. He said a decision on the September VSF meeting (whether in-person or virtual) would be made in August. He stated that Mr. Lesinski also serves as a member of the VSF and leads the VSF Development Committee, and said that Mr. Lesinski has noted at the last VSF meeting that donations were down this year due to COVID-19. He remarked that several members would be leaving the VSF at the end of June and that new leaders would be elected. (The VSF report is included as Attachment 6 to these minutes).

Ms. Linda Schreiner, the Chair of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF), gave a short report. She said that the VWM expansion opened on February 29, but then the Memorial was closed almost immediately thereafter. She said that the VWMF team, led by President Pam Seay, has continued fundraising efforts and has identified new ways to stay connected to the Board and to members of the community. She said that the VWMF's Memorial Day appeal attracted 11 new donors. She stated that, unfortunately, the VWMF was not able to thank RADM John Hekman (USN, Ret), the recently retired VWMF Executive Director in person due to COVID-19, but would look for a way to thank him for his many contributions. She remarked that, even while the interior was closed, there were over 2,000 visitors to the Memorial's exterior.

Chairman Dick recognized Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Carlos Hopkins and asked him to make a few comments. Secretary Hopkins remarked on the comments made earlier by Deputy Secretary Jabs and stated he was looking forward to working with the Board and new legislative members.

Chairman Dick called on Mrs. Brandi Jancaitis, the Military and Veterans Affairs Manager with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), to update the Board on the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF) and gave an overview of the VISR (Virginia Identify, Screen, and Refer) Pilot.

Mrs. Jancaitis reviewed the focus of the VISR Pilot, which launched in February, and the need to enhance infrastructure for suicide prevention and safety planning in community settings. She

noted that over 40 community agencies, including from DVS Benefits and VVFS, stepped up to deliver suicide screening both in-person and virtually. She added that VISR allows partners, the Governor's Challenge team, and others to talk about services for SMVF and increase resource connections early and often, hopefully intervening early in a crisis. Mrs. Jancaitis praised the work of VVFS Director Carol Berg and her team to deliver military cultural competency in a virtual manner. She noted that 500 partners were trained last year at six in-person events and that over 700 had been trained since March in the online format. Mrs. Jancaitis also thanked DVS Deputy Commissioner Annie Walker and her team for including a suicide prevention block in the upcoming 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Summit. She concluded by recognizing that everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention, and that she looked forward to continuing to work with the Board on this vital issue.

Chairman Dick thanked Mrs. Jancaitis for her report. He noted that, even though the Board had been briefed at past issues, it remains a critical issue that the Board must continue to stay on top of and with it must continue to be engaged.

Mrs. Jancaitis' reports are included as Attachments 7.a., and 7.b. to these minutes).

Legislators' post-session updates – BVS legislative members

Chairman Dick asked the BVS legislative members to give post-session update, beginning with Senator Mamie Locke.

Senator Locke noted that many important issues were passed by the 2020 General Assembly, but that several bills were carried forward to the 2021 session. She noted that some of these were proposed constitutional amendments, like one proposed by Senator Bryce Reeves. Senator Locke said that these were carried forward to the 2021 session because it is in the 2nd year of a biennium that proposed constitutional amendments are first introduced in the General Assembly.

Delegate Buddy Fowler noted that he serves on the House Finance Committee, which in the House is responsible for issues related to revenue, and that he expects there to be a Special Session related to the impact COVID-19 has had on state revenues. He commended Senator Reeves and Delegate Helmer for their work, and noted that the budget amendment regarding active duty pay for the members of the Virginia National Guard was a big win. He said that he continues to be engaged with veterans service organizations in his area.

Delegate Dan Helmer remarked that the 2020 session had some significant accomplishments for veterans, and that he was proud to carry the proposed amendment (2nd resolution) relating to the personal property (car) tax exemption for disabled veterans, noting that it will be on the ballot in November. He noted that the General Assembly had passed several bills that, while they may not be thought of a veteran-specific, would impact the veterans population. This includes the passage of a minimum wage bill and other labor protection that will help younger veterans. He remarked on the work yet to be done, such as the proposed amendment, continued to 2021, regarding tax exemptions for low income veterans. He concluded by noting that he was disappointed that legislation supporting participation in primary elections did not pass, but hoped it would be addressed.

Delegate Kathleen Murphy said that she was pleased by the approval of additional funds for the DVS Women Veterans Program, but was disappointed that the funding had to be unallotted due to COVID-19. She also remarked about the passage of legislation related to veterans with PTSD being able to withdraw from college with no financial penalty and the bill allowing family members of military service members to continue at Virginia colleges and universities at in-state rates, even after the family moves to a duty post in another state.

New Business

There was no new business, nor were there “Good of the Order” reports for this meeting.

Chairman Dick called the members’ attention to the book “*It Shouldn’t Be This Hard To Serve Your Country*,” by Dr. David Shulkin, former VA Secretary. He noted that the book gives some good insight into the challenges that the VA faces and how it is addressing it, and commends it to the members’ attention.

He reminded the members about the upcoming 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Summit.

Public Comment

There were no individuals seeking to make public comment.

Wrap Up & Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Dick asked for a motion to adjourn. Delegate Kathleen Murphy made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Victor Angry, that the Board adjourn. The **motion carried by unanimous consent** and the meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

ATTACHMENT 1
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES
ELECTRONIC MEETING

June 10, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

AGENDA

9:50 a.m. – start pre-meeting comms checks

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:05)
- III. Approval of Agenda, by roll call vote – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:08)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the November 14, 2019 meeting, by roll call vote – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:08 – 10:11)
- V. Introduction of DVS staff and guests – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:11 – 10:14)
- VI. Remarks by DVS Commissioner John Maxwell and update on current DVS operational status (10:14-10:20)
- VII. Preparation for August 20 meeting – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:20-10:40)
 - a. Review of BVS powers and duties
 - b. BVS ByLaws/proposed changes (roll call vote on proposed changes)
 - c. Discussion of BVS’s role in shaping state veterans policy and priorities
 - d. Thinking ahead – operating in a (post) COVID-19 environment
 - e. Overview of BVS work group process and points of contact
- VIII. Reports (10:40 – 11:05)
 - a. Joint Leadership Council – *Frank Wickersham, JLC Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Jack Hilgers, VSF 1st Vice Chairman*
 - c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation – *Linda Schreiner, VWMF Chairman*
 - d. Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among SMVF – *Brandi Jancaitis, Military and Veterans Affairs Manager, DBHDS*
 - e. Legislators’ post-session updates – *BVS legislative members*
- IX. New Business: (11:05-11:15)
 - “Good of the Order” Reports, *All Members*
- X. Public comment (11:15 – 11:25)
- XI. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Michael Dick, Chairman* (11:25-11:30)

ATTACHMENT 2



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

John Maxwell
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220
Fax: (804) 786-0302

Virginia Department of Veterans Services Update for Board of Veterans Services June 10, 2020

Since the last meeting of the Board of Veterans Services, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) has undergone a significant amount of change. VDVS remains committed to serving veterans and families and we've seen some outstanding innovation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department transitioned to an all mostly remote operations model to protect employees and clients:

- Benefit and veteran/family support services are being provided virtually through email, telephone, and USPS. Claims filing and processing has continued. We have seen a noticeable decrease in the number of clients assisted, especially for Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS). In addition, community resources have been in a constant state of flux making care coordination more difficult.
- State cemetery operations followed National Cemetery Administration (NCA) guidelines to provide only direct interments with no more than 10 people allowed to view the burial at the cemetery. Since committal services and military honors were put on hold in accordance with NCA guidelines, we have seen a 20% drop in interments.
- The interior sections of the Virginia War Memorial have been closed to the public, although many continue to visit the exterior portions of the Memorial. The Virginia War Memorial hosted a Memorial Day observance that was broadcast on television in Richmond and Hampton Roads, in addition to being livestreamed. Nielsen ratings and livestream counts indicate that at least 37,000 viewers saw the ceremony.
- Operations at the Veteran Care Centers have continued, but they have been closed to visitors and family visits. At Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, one resident and five staff tested positive for COVID-19. At Virginia Veterans Care Center, one staff contracted the virus.
- Education, transition and employment services have continued, although the VETE team switched to providing virtual services. Transition services and V3 certification are seeing substantial interest from clients. The transition assistance team coordinated with the Virginia

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- Chamber on one hiring fair, with a 2nd being held on 10 June. The Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) program continues in full force and hiring numbers are consistent with pre-COVID levels.
- The Virginia Women Veterans Summit (June 17-19) will be held virtually.
- State Approving Agency (GI Bill program certification) in-person compliance surveys were placed on hold. Some schools have scheduled remote surveys (optional).
- We are experiencing a robust number of Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) applications.

We are ready to execute our return to providing face-to-face services. Below is our timeline:

- In stages, Benefit and VVFS offices will begin to see veterans and families through appointments starting on June 29. We will start with offices in which social distancing protocols and PPE are readily implemented, allowing us to learn lessons for the more challenging offices (those with physical distancing and extensive employee health concerns).
- Cemeteries will hold committal services starting on June 22.
- The Virginia War Memorial will open its interior displays to the public on June 29.

The following items are important considerations as we move forward:

- Working through the challenges of restarting our face-to-face services provision with new requirements (appointments, PPE, and hygiene/disinfecting protocols).
- Rebuilding community relationships since those require regular face-to-face interactions.
- Updating our technology: there are applications which can make us more efficient.
- Examine policy changes that may benefit VDVS' provision of services.
- Manage any budget shortfalls that may be created by the COVID 19 pandemic.

We are developing a communication strategy that focuses are five lines of effort:

- Generationally appropriate themes and methods
- Increase the VDVS digital footprint
- Building upon relationships with media and stakeholders
- Targeted marketing and communication plans
- Develop an agency of brand ambassadors

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services is open to feedback and we look forward to collaborating with the Board of Veterans Services and other stakeholders to improve outreach and offerings to Virginia's veterans and their families.

Respectfully submitted,



John Maxwell

ATTACHMENT 3

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES BY-LAWS (revised 06/10/2020)

Article I – Authority and Statement of Purpose

1. Authority: The authority for the Board of Veterans Services is found in § 2.2-2452 of the Code of Virginia (the Code).
2. Statement of Purpose: The Board of Veterans Services (the Board) is a policy board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The Board is responsible for monitoring the welfare of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and setting policies to enhance veteran services across the Commonwealth.

Article II – Membership

1. Composition and Appointment of Members: The Board consists of 26 members, including seven legislative members, 15 nonlegislative citizen members and four *ex officio* members. Three members from the Senate are appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Four members from the House of Delegates are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates. Nonlegislative citizen members are appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), the Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) Board, and the Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) serve *ex officio*.
2. Terms: Legislative members, the DVS Commissioner, the JLC Chairman, the VSF Chairman, and the VWMF Chairman serve Board terms coincide with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, are for the unexpired terms. All members may be reappointed. However, no House member can serve more than six consecutive two-year terms, no Senate member can serve more than three consecutive four-year terms. Non-legislative citizen members appointed to serve an unexpired term are eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms immediately succeeding such unexpired term.
3. Qualifications: Board members are appointed for the expertise they have regarding the various service lines and programs administered by DVS. This should include at least one board member with experience in best practices in each of the following: benefits claim service; budgets and strategic planning; cemetery operations; education; employment, training, and entrepreneurship, medical and health care management; mental and behavioral health, justice involved veterans and the legal system.

Article III – Officers

1. General: DVS shall provide staff to assist the Board in their administrative, planning and procedural duties.

The Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. The DVS Commissioner is not eligible to serve as Chair.

2. Primary Duties of the Chair: Preside over all meetings and perform the duties required before, during and after to ensure a smooth, well-run meeting. The Chair will serve as an *ex officio* member of the Veterans Services Foundation (with voting privileges) and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (with no voting privileges). The Chair may designate a Board member to represent him/her at these meetings. The Chair shall appoint work groups, as needed, and in such a way as to allow the Board to fulfill its' powers and duties.
3. Additional Duties of the Chair: The Chair shall work closely with DVS staff and Board members on pre-meeting planning and preparations. Shall maintain communication with the Commissioner, and other DVS staff, on all budget, policy and strategic planning initiatives put forward by the Board. Shall meet with legislators, as needed, and represent the Board before the Virginia General Assembly. Shall coordinate with DVS on long-term strategic planning and budgetary issues to maintain strong programs and services within DVS for Virginia's veterans. Shall maintain communication with each Board member and assign projects and duties as needed. Upon request of the Commissioner, the Chair shall write letters to communicate policy and budget initiatives affecting DVS and Virginia's veterans to legislators.
4. Primary Duties of the Vice Chair: In the absence of the Chair, preside at Board meetings; perform duties as assigned by the Chair; assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the event the Chair can no longer fulfill them; and assume the role of Chair for the remainder of the elected Chair's term, if necessary.
5. Term of Service: The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve a two-year term of office. The Chair and Vice-Chair are eligible for re-election, but can serve no more than two consecutive terms. In the event the office of Chair or Vice-Chair is vacated prior to the scheduled completion of that officer's term of office, a Chair or Vice-Chair shall be elected to serve the remainder of the term of office, in which case an election to fill an unexpired term greater than one year shall count as one term toward the two consecutive term limit.
6. Elections: Candidates for office may either put their own name forward, or may be nominated by another member. Nominations will be made to the Chair, verbally or in writing, so that the nominees can be conveyed to the full Board at least 14 days prior to the meeting when elections will be held. Elections will be by voice vote during the first regularly scheduled meeting following July 1.

Article IV – Powers and Duties of Board

1. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise in the performance of his/her duties.
2. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, or the Governor, related to the provision of care and services to veterans.
3. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans.
4. Review polices related to the coordinated delivery of veterans services and develop recommendations for policies and procedures related to the efficient and effective delivery of services provided by DVS.
5. Review and advise the DVS Commissioner on the Department’s strategic plan and annual report.
6. Provide recommendations to DVS regarding the acquisition of facilities that may benefit the Commonwealth’s veterans, including, but not limited to, veterans cemeteries and veterans care centers.

Article V – Work Groups

1. The Board shall organize itself in such a way as to allow it to fulfill its powers and duties, including work groups, created at the discretion of the Chair.
2. Work groups, on behalf of the entire Board, will perform detailed analytical and investigative work on a specific issue. Work groups will be formed only to deal with policy or procedural issues related the DVS service lines; policy initiatives regarding veterans; researching programs and initiatives currently in place in other states and the possibility of pursuing and implementing similar programs in Virginia; or other projects as requested by the Board Chair and/or DVS Commissioner.
3. Work groups shall form upon the call and discretion of the Chair, and complete their work within 12 consecutive months from the time the Chair nominates and the Board members approve the formation and membership of the work group. Committee members will be selected for their subject matter expertise. The Chair shall name a Committee Chair and at least two additional members. The work group shall work with DVS staff to compile a final report, which they will present to the Chair and Commissioner, and then present to the Board at the first regularly scheduled meeting following the completion of their work.
4. Any Board member may make a request for a work group to the Board Chair.

Article VI – Service Line Points of Contact (POCs)

1. The Chair shall appoint Points of Contact (POC) from the membership of the Board with the specific qualifications and experience to best serve each of the DVS Service Line Directors, providing support in developing effective policy recommendations related to the services provided to Virginia’s veterans.
2. Each POC shall provide oversight, counsel and develop recommendations for the Service Line Director and Commissioner on the administration, organization, fiscal operation, expansion and policies for the function of the service line, procedures to ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements, and when applicable, assist in the development of professional competency testing and performance reviews to ensure the highest quality of expertise.
3. When applicable, POCs shall ensure that all relevant policies and hiring and training practices are followed through on by the Director, and Supervisors, if relevant.
4. For Service Line Directors with more than two POCs, all work and meetings shall be in compliance with FOIA and other state regulations regarding Virginia Boards and Commissions.
5. Each POC shall be available to the DVS staff and Commissioner for assistance with the annual review of the operational, financial and organizational policies.
6. The Service Line POCs shall be:
 - Benefits Services
 - Behavioral Health & Housing
 - Cemeteries
 - Communications
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Legal & Criminal Justice
 - Policy & Budget
 - Strategic Planning
 - Veterans Care Centers

Article VII – Meetings and Compensation

1. Meetings: The Board will meet at least three times a year, or on the call of the Chair.
2. Attendance: Board members shall attend all or the majority of meetings in each year. If a member is unable to attend due to an emergency or personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the emergency or personal matter to the Chair within 3 days of the meeting, the member shall be allowed to attend the meeting remotely, following all

procedures and guidelines laid out in the Code of Virginia, Chapter 37 – Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) § 2.2-3708.1 “Participation in meetings in event of emergency or personal matter; certain disabilities; distance from meeting location for certain public bodies.” A copy of the code section is in the member handbook distributed to each member upon appointment to the board. It is the responsibility of each member to read, understand and follow the procedures.

3. Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses: Board members shall be reimbursed for expenses and compensated for Board service as provided for in the Code of Virginia and the current Appropriations Act.

Article VIII –Miscellaneous

1. Quorum: A majority of the voting members of the Board constitutes a quorum.
2. Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws: These Bylaws can be amended by a two-thirds vote cast from voting Board members, if prior notice of the vote has been given.
3. Parliamentary Authority: The adopted parliamentary authority for Board meetings is the current version of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

ATTACHMENT 4

Board of Veterans Services Points of Contact – as of 06/10/2020



101 N. 14TH STREET, 17TH FL.
RICHMOND, VA 23219

Michael Dick,
Chairman

Tammi Lambert,
Vice Chairman

Victor Angry

Carl Bedell

Carl Bess

Paige Cherry

Senator John Cosgrove

Delegate Buddy Fowler

Delegate Dan Helmer

James O. Icenhour, Jr.,

Thuraya Kent

M. Lyla Kohistany

John Lesinski

Senator Mamie Locke

Delegate Kathleen
Murphy

Kathy Owens

Senator Bryce Reeves

Efrain (Frank) Reyes

Delegate Marcus Simon

Julie Waters

Frank Wickersham, III

Chairman, Joint
Leadership Council of
Veterans Service
Organizations

Frank Finelli,

Chairman, Veterans
Services Foundation

Linda Schreiner,
Chairman, Virginia
War Memorial
Foundation

John M. Maxwell,
Commissioner, Virginia
Department of
Veterans Services

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

POINTS OF CONTACT – AS OF JUNE 10, 2020

BVS MEMBER	POC FOR	DVS SERVICE LINE & DIRECTOR	COMMISSIONER/DC POC
August 20			
Carl Bedell	Benefits Services	Benefits, Donna Williams	Tom Herthel
Carl Bess, Mamie Locke	Behavioral Health & Rehabilitative Services	VVFS, Carol Berg	Tom Herthel
Tammi Lambert	Homelessness & Housing Services	VVFS, Carol Berg; Matt Leslie, VVFS Asst. Dir.	Tom Herthel
Thuraya Kent (NoVa), Kathy Owens (HR)	Employment	Transition & Employment, Nicole Anderson, Ross Koenig	Annie Walker
John Lesinski	Rural veterans (including broadband)	Tom Herthel, DC	Commissioner
Lyla Kohistany, Kathleen Murphy	Women Veterans	Women Veterans Program, Beverly VanTull	Annie Walker
December 16			
Victor Angry	Transition & Outreach Efforts (MMAC, VTAP & HVN)	Transition & Employment, Nicole Anderson, Keta Fetters	Annie Walker
Bryce Reeves, Paige Cherry	Justice-Involved Veterans & Veteran Treatment Dockets	VVFS, Carol Berg; Donna Harrison, Criminal Justice Director	Tom Herthel
Julie Waters	Veterans and the Arts	VVFS, Carol Berg; VWM Clay Mountcastle	Tom Herthel, Steven Combs
Kathy Owens, Buddy Fowler	Virginia War Memorial	VWM, Clay Mountcastle	Steven Combs
Frank Reyes	Cemeteries	Cemeteries, Scott Miller and Susan Ulrich	Tom Herthel
Dan Helmer, John Cosgrove	Care Centers – Puller, Jones & Cabacoy	Steven Combs, CDC	Steven Combs
Spring 2021			
Michael Dick, Marcus Simon	Education	Education, Martina Murray	Annie Walker
Thuraya Kent	Care Centers – SBVCC and VVCC	Robyn Jennings (SBVCC); Todd Barnes (VVCC)	Steven Combs
Michael Dick	Strategic Plans	Steven Combs, CDC	Commissioner
Jim Icenhour	Communications & Marketing, Outreach	Communications, Tina Parlett-Calhoun	Commissioner
Michael Dick, Legislators	Legislative priorities, budget amendments & draft legislation	Steven Combs, CDC	Commissioner

Alternate to the JLC – Carl Bess

Alternate to the VSF – Paige Cherry

ATTACHMENT 5



101 N. 14TH ST., 17TH FLOOR
RICHMOND VA 23219

Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United States Army
Disabled American Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Fifth Baptist Veterans Ministry
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Korean War Veterans Association
Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Navy Seabee Veterans of America
Non-Commissioned Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
Virginia National Guard Association
Women Marines Association

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES June 10, 2020

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) met on December 18, 2019, at the American Legion State Headquarters in Richmond. At the December meeting, the JLC covered a number of topics, including updates on Veterans Treatment Dockets in the Commonwealth, and reports from Virginia National Guard, the Department of Veterans Services, the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), and the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF).

Much of the December 2019 JLC meeting focused on the six recommendations put forward to the Governor, Virginia General Assembly, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and the Department of Veterans Services for consideration in the 2020 General Assembly session. The JLC reviewed the military- and veteran-related items in the Governor's introduced budget, military- and veteran-related legislation that had been introduced to date, and finalized preparations for the annual JLC Conference at the General Assembly.

The annual JLC Conference at the General Assembly was held on January 15, 2020. JLC members fanned out across the Pocahontas Building to meet with their Senators and Delegates, along with those sponsoring military- and veteran-related legislation, to advocate for veterans active duty, Guard, and military family issues. Later in the day, JLC members, joined by members of the BVS and JLC, met collectively with leaders from the Executive and Legislative branches of government for updates on JLC 2020 initiatives and other items of interest to the military and veterans communities.

JLC members regularly attended meetings of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC) throughout the 2020 session.

A summary of the JLC 2020 Initiatives is attached to this report, showing status as of May 11, 2020. In addition, the JLC closely followed all military- and veteran-related legislation and budget items considered during the 2020 session – a summary of those items is also attached.

The JLC meeting scheduled for April was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our next meeting is scheduled for July 22.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank G. Wickersham, III
Chairman

THE 25 ORGANIZATIONS OF THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HAVE MORE THAN 250,000 MEMBERS

Joint Leadership Council Report (continued – Attachment 5.a.)

Summary of JLC 2020 Initiatives – as of May 11, 2020

INITIATIVE	RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
JLC 2020-01 <i>2nd Resolution – Personal Property Tax Exemption</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation, and send to the voters via ballot initiative, creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans.	Budget Amendment: N/A Legislation: HB1268 (Helmer): Passed House (93-7); Passed Senate (40-0); Approved by GOV HJ103: Agreed to by House (91-4); Agreed to by Senate (40-0); GOV action not required as this is a resolution WILL BE ON THE BALLOT November 3, 2020 SB446/SJ33 (Reeves) & SB820/SJ58 (Morrissey): SB820/SJ58 were incorporated into SB446/SJ58, which were Continued to 2021
JLC 2020-02 <i>Counting Military Absentee Ballots After Election Day</i>	That the General Assembly enact and the Governor sign legislation that directs Virginia registrars receive and count military overseas absentee ballots postmarked on or before election day and which arrive by 5:00 p.m. on the second business day before the State Board of Elections meets to certify the results of the election.	Budget Amendment: N/A Legislation: HB191 (J. Cole): Incorporated into HB203 HB203 (Tran): Continued to 2021 SB455 (Reeves): Passed House with substitute (93-2); Senate agreed to House substitute (38-0); Approved by GOV
JLC 2020-03 <i>Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income Disabled Veterans</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.	Budget Amendment: 0 #1s Reeves Language Only Not included in Senate budget Legislation: HB125 (Miyares); HB1619 (Helmer): Passed House (100-0); Senate continued to 2021 SB456 (Reeves): Continued to 2021
JLC 2020-04 <i>Virginia National Guard Emergency Response Pay</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly ensure Virginia's continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard, through raising the minimum National Guard Emergency Response Pay (ERP) to equal the currently used DOD pay table plus a 2-10% increased adjustment, depending on rank.	Budget Amendment: Budget Language included in Item 472 Legislation: HB1718 (Freitas): Left in committee SB753 (Reeves): Passed Senate (40-0); Passed House (98-0) with Amendment; Senate agreed to House amendment (39-0); Approved by GOV
JLC 2020-05 <i>Tax Credits for Employers who Hire VNG and Reserves</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve Tax credits for employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members.	Budget Amendment: 0 #2s Reeves Language Only. Not included in GA-budget Legislation: HB230 (Freitas) – incorporated HB1620; HB1620 (Helmer): Continued to 2021 SB218 (Suetterlein); SB457 (Reeves): Both bills Continued to 2021
JLC 2020-06 <i>Microloans for Veterans Program (MVP)</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly provide an appropriation in the amount of \$1,000,000 in FY20 and \$1,000,000 in FY21 for the Microloan for Veterans Program fund.	Budget Amendment: Del. Keam 128 #5h - \$1M in FY21&22; Sen. Reeves 464 #2s \$1M in FY21&22. Not included in GA-approved budget Legislation: SB458 (Reeves): 2/3: Passed Senate (40-0); Left in House Appropriations

Joint Leadership Council Report (continued – Attachment 5.b.)

2020 Virginia General Assembly Session - Military and Veteran related Bills/Resolutions - as of 5/11/2020		
The bills listed on this page were passed by the General Assembly and approved by the Governor. Unless otherwise noted, the legislation is effective July 1, 2020		
The resolutions listed on this page were agreed to by the House and Senate. Resolutions are not acted on by the Governor.		
Summary: 15 House bills; three House resolutions; 12 Senate bills		
BILL NUMBER	LIS SUMMARY - AS PASSED	PASSAGE/APPROVAL
HOUSE		
HB 135 Miyares Virginia Consumer Protection Act; assignment of right to receive veteran's benefits.	Veterans' benefits. Provides that if any person advertises, arranges, offers, or enters into any assignment of right to receive veterans' pension or retirement benefits, such action constitutes a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act if such assignment is prohibited or void under specified federal anti-assignment acts.	1/22: Passed House 100-0; 2/27: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/25: Approved by Governor
HB 143 Ware Unemployment compensation; leaving employment to follow military spouse.	Unemployment compensation; leaving employment to follow military spouse. Repeals the sunset provision on the current statutory provision that provides that good cause for leaving employment exists if an employee voluntarily leaves a job to accompany the employee's spouse, who is on active duty in the military or naval services of the United States, to a new military-related assignment established pursuant to a permanent change of duty order from which the employee's place of employment is not reasonably accessible. This provision will presently expire on Dec 31, 2020.	1/22: Passed House 100-0; 2/20: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/10: Approved by Governor
HB 211 Hurst License plates, special; issuance for persons awarded the United States Air Medal, etc.	Special license plate; Air Medal. Creates a special license plate for persons awarded the Air Medal or for unremarried surviving spouses of such persons. An annual \$10 fee, in addition to the prescribed cost of state license plates, will be charged for each set of such plates issued.	2/27: Passed Senate with substitute 40-0; 3/4: Senate substitute agreed to by House 92-0; 4/9: Approved by Governor
HB 411 Delaney Veterans; DMV shall offer information on services available to any person.	Department of Motor Vehicles; information for veterans. Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to offer information on veteran services available in the Commonwealth to any person who identifies himself as a veteran on a document submitted to the Department for the purpose of a driver or vehicle transaction. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2021.	1/29: Passed House 98-0; 3/4: Passed Senate 40-0; 4/6: Approved by Governor
HB 437 Carroll Foy DGS; disposition of surplus materials, permit sale to military spouse-owned businesses.	Department of General Services; disposition of surplus materials; permit sale to active military-owned and military spouse-owned businesses. Requires the Department of General Services to permit surplus materials to be sold, prior to public sale or auction, to active military-owned and military spouse-owned businesses.	2/5: Passed House 85-14; 2/24: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/18: Approved by Governor

HB 446 McGuire DGS: disposition of surplus materials, donation of surplus computers.	<p>Department of General Services; disposition of surplus materials; donation of surplus computers; United States military. Requires the Department of General Services to permit surplus computers and related equipment to be donated to organizations in the Commonwealth granted tax-exempt status under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that refurbish computers and related equipment for donation to veterans and active military, naval, or air service members. The bill also provides that any such donation to an organization shall be conditioned upon, and in consideration of, the organization's promise to refurbish the donated equipment and distribute it free of charge to such veterans or active military, naval, or air service members.</p>	<p>1/29: Passed House 98-0; 2/17: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/2: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 447 Murphy Active duty military personnel, etc.; eligibility for in-state tuition and other benefits.	<p>Active duty military personnel or activated or temporarily mobilized reservists or guard members; dependents; eligibility for in-state tuition and other educational benefits. Requires the condition of continuous enrollment in a public institution of higher education or private institution of higher education currently imposed on dependents of active duty military personnel or activated or temporarily mobilized reservists or guard members in order to be eligible for in-state tuition and other educational benefits afforded to Virginia students to be waived if the dependent verifies that a break of no longer than one year was required in order to support a spouse or parent on orders for a change of duty assignment or location.</p>	<p>2/10: Passed House 99-0; 2/24: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/18: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 456 Murphy Higher educational institutions, public; withdrawal of veteran student.	<p>Public institutions of higher education; veterans; withdrawal; tuition refund. Requires each public institution of higher education to provide a refund of the tuition and mandatory fees paid by any veteran student for any course from which he is forced to withdraw, for the first time, due to a service-connected medical condition during a semester, as certified in writing to the institution by a physician licensed to practice medicine who treated the veteran student for such medical condition. Such refund shall not be issued when three-quarters of a course has been completed at the time that the veteran student withdraws from the course.</p>	<p>2/24: Passed Senate with substitute 40-0; 2/26: Senate substitute agreed to by House 97-0; 3/23: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 479 Kilgore Death certificate; veterans; fees.	<p>Death certificate; veterans; fees. Expands list of parties eligible to obtain a free certified copy of a veteran's death certificate for service-connected benefits to include any funeral director or funeral service licensee who provides funeral services for the veteran, if so requested by the surviving spouse of the veteran.</p>	<p>2/3: Passed House 99-0; 2/24: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/18: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 967 Willett Military service members and veterans; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses.	<p>Professions and occupations; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses of military service members. Provides for the expedited issuance of credentials to the spouses of military service members who are (i) ordered to federal active duty under Title 10 of the United States Code or (ii) veterans who have left active duty service within one year of the submission of an application to a board if the spouse accompanies the service member to the Commonwealth or an adjoining state or the District of Columbia. Under current law, the expedited review is provided more generally for active duty members of the military who are the subject of a military transfer to the Commonwealth. The bill also authorizes a regulatory board within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation or the Department of Health Professions or any other board in Title 54.1 (Professions and Occupations) to waive any requirement relating to experience if the board determines that the documentation provided by the applicant supports such waiver. This bill incorporates HB 930 and is identical to SB 981.</p>	<p>1/27: Passed House 98-0; 2/17: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/2: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 990 Reid Military Affairs, Department of; change of secretariat.	<p>Department of Military Affairs; change of secretariat. Moves the Department of Military Affairs from the Public Safety and Homeland Security secretariat to the Veterans and Defense Affairs secretariat.</p>	<p>2/3: Passed House 98-0; 2/17: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/3: Approved by Governor</p>
HB 1253 Scott Virginia Defense Force; maximum age for recruitment.	<p>Virginia Defense Force; maximum age for recruitment. Permits the Adjutant General of Virginia to recruit members to the Virginia Defense Force who are between the ages of 65 and 75. Under current law, the Adjutant General is only permitted to retain existing members of the Virginia Defense Force once they have attained the age of 65.</p>	<p>2/10: Passed House 99-0; 2/24: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/27: Approved by Governor</p>

HB 1268 Helmer Constitutional amendment: personal property tax exemption for motor vehicle of a disabled veteran.	Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2020, election to approve or reject a personal property tax exemption for a motor vehicle that is owned and used primarily by or for a veteran of the armed forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has a one hundred percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability.	2/11: Passed House 93-7; 2/27: Passed Senate 40-0; 3/31: Approved by Governor
HB 1269 Helmer Veterans Services Foundation: board of trustees assisted by volunteers, etc.	Veterans Services Foundation. Provides that the board of trustees of the Veterans Services Foundation may be assisted in the administration of the Foundation by volunteers and staff members employed by the Executive Director. The bill also (i) adds agents and advisors to the composition of the Foundation membership; (ii) allows ex officio members who do not serve as the chairman of another board to serve as chairman of the board of trustees; (iii) specifies that individuals appointed to perform the duties of treasurer and secretary are ex officio, nonvoting officers of the board of trustees; (iv) provides that employment of agents, advisors, volunteers, or employees by the Executive Director is subject to the approval of the board of trustees; and (v) clarifies that the members of the board of trustees and employees of the Foundation are subject to the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (§ 2.2-3100 et seq.).	3/4: Conference report agreed to by House 95-0; 3/7: Conference report agreed to by Senate 40-0; 4/10: Approved by Governor
HB 1275 O'Quinn Veteran Student Transition Grant Fund and Program: established.	State Council of Higher Education for Virginia; Veteran Student Transition Grant Fund and Program. Establishes the Veteran Student Transition Grant Fund as a special nonreverting fund in the state treasury and requires the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to establish the Veteran Student Transition Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants from the Fund on a competitive basis to a public institution of higher education, private institution of higher education, or group of such institutions that proposes a new and innovative program or research project relating to improving the transition of veteran students from military to higher education or from higher education to the civilian workforce.	2/24: Passed Senate with amendment 40-0; 2/26: Senate amendment agreed to by House 97-0; 4/2: Approved by Governor
HJ 17 Cox Commending The American Legion Auxiliary.	Commending The American Legion Auxiliary.	1/13: Agreed to by House by voice vote; 1/16: Agreed to by Senate by voice vote
HJ 103 Helmer Constitutional amendment: personal property tax exemption for motor vehicle of a disabled veteran.	Constitutional amendment (second resolution); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides that one motor vehicle of a veteran who has a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability shall be exempt from state and local taxes. The amendment provides that only automobiles and pickup trucks qualify for the exemption. Additionally, the exemption is only applicable on the date the motor vehicle is acquired or the effective date of the amendment, whichever is later, and is not applicable for any period of time prior to the effective date.	2/10: Agreed to by House 91-4; 3/3: Agreed to by Senate 40-0
HJ 145 O'Quinn Navy Week	Navy Week. Recognizes Navy Week on March 30 - April 5, 2020, in Tri-Cities.	1/28: Agreed to by House 95-0; 3/3: Agreed to by Senate by voice vote
SENATE		
SB 41 DeSteph Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Va. Council on: membership.	Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children; membership. Adds two nonlegislative citizen members to the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, one of whom is a parent of a military child, to be appointed by the Governor, and one of whom is a military spouse serving on the Department of Education's Military Student Support Process Action Team, to be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This bill incorporates SB 47.	2/11: Passed Senate 39-0; 2/24: Passed House 98-0; 4/2: Approved by Governor

SB 321 Lewis Veterans; eligibility for status under state and local laws.	<p>Department of Veterans Services; eligibility for veteran status under state and local laws; change in treatment of certain discharges. Provides that any person who was separated from active military, naval, or air service with an other than honorable discharge due solely to such person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression may petition the Department of Veterans Services to have such discharge recorded with the Department as honorable. The bill provides that persons whose discharge status is changed pursuant to such petition shall be afforded the same rights, privileges, and benefits authorized by state law and local ordinances as any other veteran who was honorably discharged.</p>	<p>2/10: Passed Senate 39-0; 3/4: Passed House 79-17; 4/11: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 403 Hashmi Va. War Memorial Carillon; control, etc., by Div. of Engineering & Buildings.	<p>Department of General Services; Division of Engineering and Buildings; custody, control, and supervision of the Virginia War Memorial Carillon. The bill places full custody, control, and supervision of the Virginia War Memorial Carillon in the Division of Engineering and Buildings by repealing provisions of the code that give the City of Richmond responsibility for the upkeep of the Carillon and authority over its use.</p>	<p>1/21: Passed Senate 40-0; 2/25: Passed House 100-0; 4/6: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 455 Reeves Absentee voting; deadline for returning absentee ballot.	<p>Absentee voting; deadline for returning absentee ballot. Provides that any absentee ballot that is returned to the general registrar after the closing of the polls on election day but before noon on the third day after the election and postmarked on or before the date of the election shall be counted if the voter is found entitled to vote. This bill contains technical amendments and is identical to HB 238.</p>	<p>3/4: Passed House with substitute 93-2; 3/5: House substitute agreed to by Senate 38-0; 4/9: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 462 Reeves Higher educational institutions, public; in-state tuition, children of active duty service members.	<p>Public institutions of higher education; in-state tuition; children of active duty service members or veterans. Provides that any child of an active duty member or veteran who claims Virginia as his home state and filed Virginia tax returns for at least 10 years during active duty service is eligible for in-state tuition charges, regardless of domicile.</p>	<p>2/26: Passed House with amendment 100-0; 2/28: House amendment agreed to by Senate 37-0; 4/2: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 499 Reeves Specialty dockets; veterans docket.	<p>Specialty dockets; veterans docket. Provides that any veterans docket authorized and established as a local specialty docket in accordance with the Rules of Supreme Court of Virginia shall be deemed a "Veterans Treatment Court Program," as that term is used under federal law or by any other entity, for the purposes of applying for, qualifying for, or receiving any federal grants, other federal money, or money from any other entity designated to assist or fund such state programs. The bill contains an emergency clause.</p>	<p>1/23: Passed Senate 40-0; 2/24: Passed House 100-0; 4/2: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 745 Bell Income tax, state; exclusion, student loan forgiveness, disabled veterans.	<p>Income tax exclusion; student loan forgiveness; disabled veterans. Excludes from Virginia adjusted gross income any income received by a totally and permanently disabled veteran from student loan debt cancellation or discharge for taxable years 2020 through 2025.</p>	<p>1/23: Passed Senate 40-0; 2/24: Passed House 100-0; 4/2: Approved by Governor</p>
SB 753 Reeves Virginia National Guard; state active duty for emergency response.	<p>Virginia National Guard; state active duty for emergency response; pay and allowances for members. Provides that whenever called to state active duty in response to certain emergencies, members of the National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force receive pay and allowance equal to their rank and years of service, as determined by the Department of Military Affairs. The bill also authorizes the Adjutant General to increase state active duty pay on an annual basis by a rate not to exceed the most recent percentage increase in basic pay for members of the Armed Forces. Current law provides that (i) officers of the National Guard receive the same pay and allowances as prescribed for members of like rank in the United States Armed Forces, (ii) members of the National Guard receive the same pay and allowances as if they were on a day of Annual Training, and (iii) members of the Virginia Defense Force called to state active duty receive the same pay and allowances as persons of like grade in the National Guard for a day of Annual Training, capped at 25 years of service.</p>	<p>3/4: Passed House with amendment 98-0; 3/5: House amendment agreed to by Senate 39-0; 4/7: Approved by Governor</p>

<p>SB 948 Reeves Real property by state agencies; conveyance and transfers</p>	<p>Conveyance and transfers of real property by state agencies; Department of Military Affairs; lease of state military reservation property. Provides that, subject to general provisions governing the lease of property owned by the Commonwealth by state agencies, the Department of Military Affairs may convey a leasehold interest in any portion of State Military Reservation property to governmental or private entities when it is deemed to be in the Department's best interest to (i) provide necessary services such as lodging, training capabilities, or logistical utility services that support the Department's mission or (ii) maintain a peripheral buffer with compatible uses, including ground parking leases. The term of such lease may not exceed 50 years; however, any agreement may be extended upon the written recommendation of the Governor and the approval of the General Assembly. In the event that the Department enters into a written lease with a private individual, firm, corporation, or other entity, neither the real property that is the subject of the lease nor any improvements or personal property located on the real property that is the subject of the lease shall be subject to taxation by any local government authority, provided that the real property, improvements, or personal property is used for a purpose consistent with or supporting the Department's mission.</p>	<p>2/7: Passed Senate 39-0; 3/4: Passed House 98-0; 4/7: Approved by Governor</p>
<p>SB 978 Edwards Technical professional licenses; military science endorsement.</p>	<p>State Board of Education; technical professional licenses; military science endorsement. Directs the State Board of Education to amend its regulations to require that persons seeking a technical professional license with an endorsement to teach military science have either the appropriate credentials issued by the United States military or a recommendation from a Virginia employing educational agency.</p>	<p>2/10: Passed Senate 39-0; 2/20: Passed House 98-0; 3/3: Approved by Governor</p>
<p>SB 981 Suetterlein Military service members and veterans; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses.</p>	<p>Professions and occupations; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses of military service members. Provides for the expedited issuance of credentials to the spouses of military service members who are (i) ordered to federal active duty under Title 10 of the United States Code or (ii) veterans who have left active duty service within one year of the submission of an application to a board if the spouse accompanies the service member to the Commonwealth or an adjoining state or the District of Columbia. Under current law, the expedited review is provided more generally for active duty members of the military who are the subject of a military transfer to the Commonwealth. The bill also authorizes a regulatory board within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation or the Department of Health Professions or any other board in Title 54.1 (Professions and Occupations) to waive any requirement relating to experience if the board determines that the documentation provided by the applicant supports such waiver. This bill is identical to HB 967.</p>	<p>1/28: Passed Senate 40-0; 2/18: Passed House 100-0; 3/2: Approved by Governor</p>
<p>SB 994 Norment VMI; the Institute shall be grounded in a strict code of honor and academic excellence, etc.</p>	<p>Virginia Military Institute. Provides that Virginia Military Institute (the Institute) shall be grounded in a strict code of honor and high academics, shall uphold a strict military structure, and shall remain solely an undergraduate degree-granting institution of higher education. All cadets shall participate in one of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at all times while attending the Institute. The Institute shall continue to demonstrate its commitment to contributing to the elimination of sexual violence in the military and shall develop reasonable policies and procedures to demonstrate such continued commitment. The bill provides that the Adjutant General, who is a member of the board of visitors (the board), shall serve as an ex officio nonvoting member. Current law states that the Adjutant General shall serve ex officio. The bill removes the requirement that the board get the prior written consent of the Governor in order to exercise its powers regarding gifts, grants, devises, and bequests. The bill states that the board shall prescribe the terms upon which all cadets, and not just pay cadets, may be admitted, their number, the course of their instruction, and the nature and duration of their service. The bill provides that the Institute, rather than the board, may admit annually as state cadets, upon evidence of fair moral character, individuals selected from the Commonwealth at large who are at least 16 but not more than 25 years old. The bill replaces the current provision allowing the Institute to admit military scholarship cadets to allow the Institute to admit Virginia National Guard scholarship cadets and removes the annual cap of 40 such scholarships. The bill expands who can confer degrees to include the superintendent and removes the authority of the board to confer honorary degrees or diplomas of distinguished merit.</p>	<p>3/7: Conference report agreed to by Senate 39-0; 3/7: Conference report agreed to by House 91-4; 4/10: Approved by Governor</p>

2020 Virginia General Assembly Session - Military and Veteran related Bills/Resolutions - as of 5/11/2020

The bills and resolutions listed on this page were continued to 2021

Summary: four House bills; 10 Senate bills; 1 Senate resolution

HOUSE

BILL NUMBER

LIS SUMMARY

COMMITTEE

[HB 87 Carter Marijuana; legalization of simple possession, penalties. \(And establishment of Veterans Treatment Fund\)](#)

Marijuana; legalization of simple marijuana possession; penalties. Eliminates criminal penalties for possession of marijuana for persons who are 21 years of age or older. The bill also decriminalizes marijuana possession for persons under 21 years of age and provides a civil penalty of no more than \$100 for possession of (i) two and one-half ounces or less of marijuana or (ii) 12 or fewer marijuana plants and a civil penalty of no more than \$500 for possession of more than (a) two and one-half ounces of marijuana or (b) 12 marijuana plants. Under current law, a first offense is punishable by a maximum fine of \$500 and a maximum jail sentence of 30 days, and subsequent offenses are a Class 1 misdemeanor. The bill also modifies several other criminal penalties related to marijuana. The bill establishes a regulatory scheme for the regulation of marijuana cultivation facilities, marijuana manufacturing facilities, marijuana secure transporters, marijuana testing facilities, retail marijuana stores, and marijuana microbusinesses by the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The bill imposes an additional tax of 10 percent on retail marijuana and retail marijuana products sold by retail marijuana stores and microbusinesses and directs the first \$20 million of such revenues, after expenses of the Board are paid, to the Veterans Treatment Fund, established in the bill. The remaining tax receipts will be distributed to the localities in which the businesses operate, toward the state's share of Standards of Quality basic aid payments, and to the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund. The bill also expands the legal medical uses of marijuana and tetrahydrocannabinol from only cancer and glaucoma to any use to alleviate the symptoms of any diagnosed condition or disease determined by the prescribing doctor to benefit from the use of such substance.

02/05: Continued to 2021 in House Courts of Justice by voice vote

[HB 203 Tran Absentee voting; counting military and overseas absentee ballots received after close of polls.](#)

Absentee voting; counting military and overseas absentee ballots received after close of polls on election day. Provides that absentee ballots cast by military and overseas absentee voters that are (i) received after the close of the polls on any election day but before 5:00 p.m. on the second business day before the State Board of Elections meets to ascertain the results of the election and (ii) postmarked on or before the date of such election are to be counted if the voter is found entitled to vote. The bill provides that a postmark includes any other official indicia of confirmation of mailing by the United States Postal Service or other postal or delivery service. Under current law, such ballots cast by military and overseas absentee voters would be counted in this manner regardless of the date of any postmark, but only if the absentee ballot had been requested on or before, but not sent by, the deadline for making absentee ballots available.

01/31: Continued to 2021 in House Privileges and Elections by voice vote

HB 1619 Helmer Income tax; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a permanent service-connected.	Income tax; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a permanent service-connected disability. Provides an income tax subtraction for the military retirement income received by a veteran who has been rated with a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability. The bill provides that the subtraction is available only to those taxpayers whose federal adjusted gross income is not greater than 150 percent of the federal poverty level for a four-person household. This bill incorporates HB 125.	2/3: Passed House 98-0; 2/19: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee 14-0
HB 1620 Helmer Income tax, state and corporate; tax credit for employers of National Guard members.	Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members. Provides for taxable years 2020 through 2024 a nonrefundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for (i) wages paid by an employer to an employee who is a Virginia National Guard member or (ii) income of a self-employed National Guard member attributable to his business. The amount of the credit shall be 25 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 65 days or more during such taxable year or 15 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 45 days or more during such taxable year. The credit shall not be allowed if such member was in a military pay status for less than 45 days during such taxable year.	01/29: Continued to 2021 in House Finance by voice vote
SENATE		
BILL NUMBER	LIS SUMMARY	COMMITTEE
SB 143 Stuart Disabled veterans and surviving spouses; state subsidy of property tax exemptions.	State subsidy of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. Requires the Commonwealth to subsidize local real estate tax relief for disabled veterans and surviving spouses of members of the armed forces killed in action when more than one percent of a locality's real estate tax base is lost due to such state-mandated tax relief programs. The Commonwealth would subsidizeThe bill requires the Auditor of Public Accounts to establish an application process whereby a locality would demonstrate that more than one percent of its real estate tax base was lost. The Auditor would certify to the Governor and the General Assembly those localities that would be eligible for a subsidy, and the Governor would include in the Budget Bill a proposed appropriation of the amount of the state subsidy to be provided to localities certified as eligible localities. only that portion of tax exempt real estate that exceeds the one percent threshold.	01/21: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (16-Y 0-N)
SB 191 Peake Virginia taxable income; subtraction for active duty military income or veteran retirement.	Virginia taxable income; subtraction for active duty military income or veteran retirement compensation. Provides a subtraction from Virginia taxable income, for taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2020, for any income of active duty military members or the retirement compensation received by veterans for their service.	01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)
SB 218 Suetterlein Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members.	Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members. Provides for taxable years 2020 through 2024 a nonrefundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for (i) wages paid by an employer to an employee who is a Virginia National Guard member or (ii) income of a self-employed Virginia National Guard member attributable to his business. The amount of the credit shall be 25 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 65 days or more during such taxable year or 15 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 45 days or more during such taxable year. The credit shall not be allowed if such member was in a military pay status for less than 45 days during such taxable year. The bill allows a taxpayer to carry unused credits over for up to five taxable years.	01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)

SB 362 Dunnivant Department of Veterans Services; hyperbaric oxygen therapy; data collection.	<p>Department of Veterans Services; hyperbaric oxygen therapy; data collection. Allows the Department of Veterans Services (the Department) to contract with any hospital in the Commonwealth that furnishes the treatment option of hyperbaric oxygen therapy to provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy to any veteran in the Commonwealth who has been certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or any branch of the United States Armed Forces as having post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. The Department shall include in any contract with such hospital to furnish hyperbaric oxygen therapy the requirement that data be collected to assess the efficacy of hyperbaric oxygen therapy for veterans and any other information deemed relevant by the Department.</p>	<p>1/31: Passed Senate 40-0; 02/27: Continued to 2021 in House General Laws by voice vote</p>
SB 446 Reeves Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); personal property tax exemption for motor vehicle of a disabled veteran.	<p>Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2020, election to approve or reject a personal property tax exemption for a motor vehicle that is owned and used primarily by or for a veteran of the armed forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has a one hundred percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability.</p>	<p>02/05: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (16-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 456 Reeves Income tax; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a permanent disability.	<p>Income tax; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a permanent service-connected disability. Provides an income tax subtraction for the military retirement income received by a veteran who has been rated with a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability. The bill provides that the subtraction is available only to those taxpayers whose federal adjusted gross income is no greater than 150 percent of the federal poverty level for a four-person household.</p>	<p>01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 457 Reeves Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members.	<p>Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members. Provides for taxable years 2020 through 2024 a nonrefundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for (i) wages paid by an employer to an employee who is an active or reserve Virginia National Guard member or (ii) income of a self-employed active or reserve Virginia National Guard member attributable to his business. The amount of the credit shall be 25 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 65 days or more during such taxable year or 15 percent if such member was in a military pay status for at least 45 days but less than 65 days during such taxable year. The credit shall not be allowed if such member was in a military pay status for less than 45 days during such taxable year. The bill allows a taxpayer to carry unused credits over for up to five taxable years.</p>	<p>01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 460 Reeves Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of military spouses.	<p>Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of military spouses. Provides for taxable years 2020 through 2024 a nonrefundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for (i) wages paid by an employer to the spouse of an active member of the United States armed forces or (ii) income of a self-employed spouse of an active member of the United States armed forces. The amount of the credit shall be 25 percent of such wages or income. The bill allows a taxpayer to carry unused credits over for up to five taxable years.</p>	<p>01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 461 Reeves Veterans and active duty members of the Armed Forces; teachers; credit for service.	<p>Veterans and active duty members of the Armed Forces; teachers; credit for service. Requires each local school board to give any veteran or active duty member of any of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Commonwealth who it employs as a teacher in the local school division credit for any time served in any such forces in determining such teacher's step on the local school division's teacher salary scale.</p>	<p>2/5: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)</p>

SB 965 Peake Virginia taxable income; subtraction for certain active duty military income.	<p>Virginia taxable income; subtraction for certain active duty military income. Provides a subtraction from Virginia taxable income starting with taxable year 2020 for income of active duty military members for service outside of the United States.</p>	<p>01/29: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SJ 58 Morrissey Constitutional amendment (second resolution); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle.	<p>Constitutional amendment (second resolution); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides that one motor vehicle of a veteran who has a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability shall be exempt from state and local taxes. The amendment provides that only automobiles and pickup trucks qualify for the exemption. Additionally, the exemption is only applicable on the date the motor vehicle is acquired or the effective date of the amendment, whichever is later, and is not applicable for any period of time prior to the effective date of the amendment.</p>	<p>02/05: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance and Appropriations (16-Y 0-N)</p>

2020 Virginia General Assembly Session - Military and Veteran related Bills and Resolutions - as of 5/11/2020

The bills and resolutions listed on this page were left in committee or incorporated into other bills/resolutions

Summary: 13 House bills; five Senate bills; three Senate resolutions

HOUSE

BILL NUMBER	LIS SUMMARY	COMMITTEE
<u>HB 80 M Cole Income tax, state; deduction for veterans with a 100 percent service-connected disability.</u>	Personal income tax deduction; veterans with a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability. Provides an additional personal income tax deduction of \$930 for veterans who have been rated with a 100% service-connected, permanent, and total disability. This deduction is allowed regardless of whether the taxpayer itemizes deductions for the taxable year for federal income tax purposes.	02/11: Left in House Finance
<u>HB 125 Miyares Income tax, state; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a service-connected disability.</u>	Income tax; subtraction for low-income military veterans with a permanent service-connected disability. Provides an income tax subtraction for the military retirement income received by a veteran who has been rated with a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability. The bill provides that the subtraction is available only to those taxpayers whose federal adjusted gross income is no greater than 150 percent of the federal poverty level for a four-person household.	01/29: Incorporated by House Finance (HB1619-Helmer) by voice vote
<u>HB 191 J Cole Absentee voting; counting military and overseas absentee ballots received after close of polls.</u>	Absentee voting; counting military and overseas absentee ballots received after close of polls on election day. Provides that absentee ballots cast by military and overseas absentee voters that are (i) received after the close of the polls on any election day but before 5:00 p.m. on the second business day before the State Board meets to ascertain the results of the election and (ii) postmarked on or before the date of such election are to be counted if the voter is found entitled to vote. Under current law, such ballots cast by military and overseas absentee voters are counted in this manner regardless of the date of any postmark if the absentee ballot was requested on or before, but not sent by, the deadline for making absentee ballots available. The bill provides that a postmark includes any other official indicia of confirmation of mailing by the United States Postal Service or other postal or delivery service.	01/31: Incorporated by House Privileges and Elections (HB203-Tran) by voice vote
<u>HB 216 Helmer Nomination of candidates for elected offices; primary election or partisan nomination process.</u>	Nomination of candidates for elected offices; primary election or partisan nomination process required; restrictions on nomination method selected by political party; party identification on ballots. Requires each candidate who has been nominated by a political party or in a primary election to be identified by the name of his political party. The bill removes the restrictions on candidates for elected school boards and soil and water conservation districts from being nominated by a partisan nomination method or at a primary election. The bill further provides that a political party committee may not select a nomination method that will have the practical effect of excluding participation in the nominating process by qualified voters who are unable to attend meetings because they are (i) a member of a uniformed service, as defined in § 24.2-452, on active duty; (ii) temporarily residing outside of the United States; (iii) a student attending a school or institution of higher education; or (iv) a person with a disability.	02/11: Left in House Appropriations
<u>HB 230 Freitas Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members.</u>	Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members. Provides for taxable years 2020 through 2024 a nonrefundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for (i) wages paid by an employer to an employee who is a Virginia National Guard member or (ii) income of a self-employed National Guard member attributable to his business. The amount of the credit shall be 25 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 65 days or more during such taxable year or 15 percent if such member was in a military pay status for 45 days or more during such taxable year. The credit shall not be allowed if such member was in a military pay status for less than 45 days during such taxable year.	01/29: Incorporated by House Finance (HB1620-Helmer) by voice vote

HB 243 J.Cole Income tax subtraction; veteran retirement compensation.	Income tax subtraction; veteran retirement compensation. Provides an income tax subtraction for the annual retirement compensation received by veterans for their service.	02/11: Left in House Finance
HB 363 M.Cole (by request) Disabled veterans and surviving spouses; state subsidy of property tax exemptions.	State subsidy of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. Requires the Commonwealth to subsidize local real estate tax relief for disabled veterans and surviving spouses of members of the armed forces killed in action when more than one percent of a locality's real estate tax base is lost due to such state-mandated tax relief programs. The Commonwealth would subsidize only that portion of tax exempt real estate that exceeds the one percent threshold. The bill requires the Auditor of Public Accounts to establish an application process whereby a locality would demonstrate that more than one percent of its real estate tax base was lost. The Auditor would certify to the Governor and the General Assembly those localities that would be eligible for a subsidy, and the Governor would include in the Budget Bill a proposed appropriation of the amount of the state subsidy to be provided to localities certified as eligible localities.	2/11: Left in House Appropriations
HB 604 Freitas Virginia National Guard member benefits; health savings accounts.	Virginia National Guard member benefits; health savings accounts. Provides that a member of the Virginia National Guard may elect to receive, in lieu of any tuition assistance grants, a matching contribution from the state to a health savings account. The Department of Military Affairs shall establish a health savings account for any member who elects to receive this benefit. The matching contribution shall equal the member's contribution up to the maximum amount allowable by federal law. In order to qualify, a member must (i) have a minimum remaining obligation of two years, (ii) have satisfactorily completed required initial active duty service, (iii) be satisfactorily performing duty in accordance with regulations of the National Guard, and (iv) be eligible for such an account under federal law. The bill also provides that in the event that a member ceases to be eligible for a health savings account, by reason of being called to active duty military service or otherwise, all contributions from the state shall stop and the DMA shall provide notice to the member of the loss of eligibility.	2/11: Left in House Appropriations
HB 930 Coyner Professions and occupations; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses of military service.	Professions and occupations; expediting the issuance of credentials to spouses of military service members and veterans. Provides for the expedited issuance of credentials to the spouses of military service members who are ordered to federal active duty under Title 10 of the United States Code or are veterans if the spouse accompanies the service member or veteran to the Commonwealth or an adjoining state or the District of Columbia. Under current law, the expedited review is provided more generally for active duty members of the military who are the subject of a military transfer to the Commonwealth. The bill also authorizes a regulatory board within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation or the Department of Health Professions or any other board in Title 54.1 (Professions and Occupations) to waive any requirement relating to experience if the board determines that the documentation provided by the applicant supports such waiver.	01/21: Incorporated by House General Laws (HB967-Willett) by voice vote
HB 1144 Wampler State parks; discounted rental and service fees; military and veterans.	State parks; discounted rental and service fees; military and veterans. Directs the Department of Conservation and Recreation to establish a policy that entitles any veteran or person on active duty military service, and the accompanying spouse or child of such person, to a 50 percent discount on rental and service fees.	02/11: Left in House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

HB 1197 Tran Public institutions of higher education; certain students; eligibility for in-state tuition.	<p>Public institutions of higher education; certain students; eligibility for in-state tuition. Declares eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of domicile, any non-Virginia student enrolled at a public institution of higher education, except the Virginia Military Institute, who (i) pays for at least the equivalent of four semesters or two academic years at the institution with funds received pursuant to the federal Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 and thereafter exhausts eligibility for benefits under such act or (ii) demonstrates a commitment to pay for at least the equivalent of four semesters or two academic years at the institution with funds received pursuant to such act through an affidavit, provided that (a) any such student maintains continuous enrollment in the same degree program at the same institution after he exhausts eligibility for such benefits and (b) no such student shall remain eligible for in-state tuition charges for more than three years after he exhausts eligibility for such benefits or upon degree completion, whichever occurs first, unless he establishes domicile in the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>02/05: Failed to report (defeated) in House Education (9-Y 12-N)</p>
HB 1496 Mugler State subsidy of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and surviving spouses.	<p>State subsidy of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. Requires the Commonwealth to subsidize local real estate tax relief for disabled veterans and surviving spouses of members of the armed forces killed in action. The Commonwealth would subsidize localities for the amount of real estate tax revenue lost due to these constitutionally mandated tax relief programs. The bill requires the Auditor of Public Accounts to establish an annual application process whereby a locality would demonstrate the amount of its real estate tax base that was lost. The Auditor would certify such amounts to the Governor and the General Assembly, and the Governor would include in the Budget Bill a proposed appropriation of the amount of the state subsidy to be provided to localities.</p>	<p>2/11: Left in House Appropriations</p>
HB 1718 Freitas Virginia National Guard; state active duty for emergency response; pay and allowances for members.	<p>Virginia National Guard; state active duty for emergency response; pay and allowances for members. Provides that whenever called to state active duty in response to certain emergencies, members of the National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force receive pay and allowance equal to their rank and years of service, as determined by the Department of Military Affairs. The bill also authorizes the Adjutant General to increase state active duty pay on an annual basis by a rate not to exceed the most recent percentage increase in basic pay for members of the Armed Forces. Current law provides that (i) officers of the National Guard receive the same pay and allowances as prescribed for members of like rank in the United States Armed Forces, (ii) members of the National Guard receive the same pay and allowances as if they were on a day of Annual Training, and (iii) members of the Virginia Defense Force called to state active duty receive the same pay and allowances as persons of like grade in the National Guard for a day of Annual Training, capped at 25 years of service.</p>	<p>2/11: Left in House Public Safety</p>
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SENATE		
BILL NUMBER	LIS SUMMARY	COMMITTEE
SB 47 Spruill Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Va. Council on the; membership.	<p>Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children; membership. Increases the number of nonlegislative citizen members on the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children from five members to six members and requires that a parent of a military child be included in the composition of the Council.</p>	<p>02/07: Incorporated by Senate Rules (SB41-DeSteph) (14-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 335 Stuart Hunting and fishing license; certain military members may receive for 75 percent of fee.	<p>Hunting and fishing license; military service. Authorizes any resident who is on active duty with, has been honorably discharged after at least six months of service in, or has retired from any branch of the United States Armed Forces to apply for and receive a sportsman's hunting and fishing license for 75 percent of the fee.</p>	<p>2/3: Passed Senate 40-0 3/3: Left in House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources</p>

SB 458 Reeves Microloans for Veterans Program and Fund; creation and administration.	<p>Microloans for Veterans Program and Fund; creation and administration. Creates the Microloans for Veterans Program and Fund to be administered by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (the Authority). The bill directs the Virginia Community College System, working with the Authority and other state agencies, to develop a curriculum to provide education and mentorship to veterans. The Authority is authorized to issue loans of up to \$10,000 to veterans who agree to participate in such curriculum and meet other requirements (tier 1 loans). The Authority is authorized to issue loans of up to \$50,000 to veterans who have completed the requirements associated with a tier 1 loan and agree to meet advanced education and mentorship requirements (tier 2 loans). The provisions of the bill are contingent on funding in a general appropriation act.</p>	<p>2/3: Passed Senate 40-0 3/3: Left in House Appropriations</p>
SB 459 Reeves Hunting and fishing licenses; veterans and active duty service members.	<p>Hunting and fishing licenses; veterans and active duty service members. Authorizes any resident veteran or active duty service member to obtain at no cost a nontransferable license, valid for life, permitting the veteran or active duty service member to hunt and freshwater fish in the Commonwealth. Current law authorizes only a resident, disabled veteran to obtain such a license for no cost. The bill also authorizes a nonresident active duty service member to obtain such license for \$250.</p>	<p>1/14: Stricken at request of Patron in Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources (14-Y 0-N)</p>
SB 820 Morrissey Constitutional amendment; personal property tax exemption for motor vehicle of a disabled veteran.	<p>Constitutional amendment (voter referendum); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides for a referendum at the November 3, 2020, election to approve or reject a personal property tax exemption for a motor vehicle that is owned and used primarily by or for a veteran of the armed forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has a one hundred percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability.</p>	<p>01/28: Incorporated by Senate Privileges and Elections (SB446-Reeves) (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SJ 26 Kiggans Memorializing Congress; improvement of privatized housing for families living on military bases.	<p>Memorializing Congress; improvement of privatized housing for families living on military bases. Urges the Congress of the United States to address substandard housing conditions for families living on military bases through increased funding and holding the owners of privatized housing accountable.</p>	<p>02/12: Left in Senate Rules</p>
SJ 33 Reeves Constitutional amendment (second resolution); personal property tax exemption.	<p>Constitutional amendment (second resolution); personal property tax exemption; motor vehicle owned by a veteran who is disabled. Provides that one motor vehicle of a veteran who has a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability shall be exempt from state and local taxes. The amendment provides that only automobiles and pickup trucks qualify for the exemption. Additionally, the exemption is only applicable on the date the motor vehicle is acquired or the effective date of the amendment, whichever is later, and is not applicable for any period of time prior to the effective date of the amendment.</p>	<p>01/28: Incorporated by Senate Privileges and Elections (SJ58-Morrissey) (15-Y 0-N)</p>
SJ 36 DeSteph Military-overseas ballots; electronic return of voted ballots, report.	<p>Study; Secretary of Administration; State Board of Elections; electronic return of voted military-overseas ballots; pilot program; report. Requests the Secretary of Administration to oversee and develop a charter and directives for the State Board of Elections to form a working group to study implementation of electronic return of voted military-overseas ballots. In conducting its study, the State Board of Elections with the working group shall study and develop initial instructions and procedures that (i) consider issues related to accessibility, auditability, authentication, verification, and security through encryption, in order to ensure that any process implemented would guarantee the accuracy and integrity of voted military-overseas ballots, and (ii) recommend (a) security measures necessary to reasonably secure the transmission, processing, and storage of voter data from interception and unauthorized access; (b) methods for verifying and authenticating the identity of the voter electronically when registering to vote and when requesting a ballot from and returning a ballot to the voter's jurisdiction; (c) methods for the encryption of voted ballots; and (d) a procedure for security reviews after an election. The study shall focus on implementation of electronic return of voted military-overseas ballots first as a limited pilot program in 2021, and later on a statewide basis.</p>	<p>01/24: Passed by indefinitely in Senate Rules by voice vote</p>

2020 General Assembly Session - Military/Veterans Legislation tracked by DVS

	Introduced	Passed	Continued	Left or Incorporated
House Bills	32	15	4	13
House Resolutions	3	3	0	0
Senate Bills	27	12	10	5
Senate Resolutions	4	0	1	3
Total	66	30	15	21

2020 Virginia General Assembly Session - Military and Veteran related Budget - as of 5/11/2020

Note: House Bill 30 (HB 30) budget are listed in Budget Item Order

Note: FY21 and FY22 budget as of 3/12/20 reflect the budget as adopted by General Assembly at the end of the regular session

Note: FY21 and FY22 budget as of 4/22/20 reflect the budget as adopted by General Assembly at the end of the reconvened session

AGENCY	BUDGET ITEM	SUMMARY	BUDGET TYPE	FY21 BUDGET 3/12/20	FY21 BUDGET 4/22/20	FY22 BUDGET 3/12/20	FY22 BUDGET 4/22/20
SCHEV	HB 30, Item 150	Increase funding for Virginia Military Survivors & Dependent Education Program (stipend for students)	GF	\$750,000	Unallotted	\$750,000	Unallotted
DBHDS	HB 30, Item 322	Military/Veteran-specific funding for partial implementation of STEP-VA (total budget for STEP-VA) adds funds for outpatient services, veterans services, peer support services, and mobile crisis teams. The military/veteran portion is designed to enhance clinical services (modeled after Veterans Health Administration and DoD clinical guidelines) in CSBs for Military Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF) and lethal means safety (key focus on firearm safety) suicide prevention activities in CSBs and National Guard.	GF	\$4,263,141	Unallotted	\$3,840,490	Unallotted
DHR	HB 30, Item 385	Funding to the County of Arlington to support the Women in Military Service for America Memorial (one-time)	GF	\$75,000	Unallotted	\$0	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 463	Veterans Care Centers: increases the nongeneral fund appropriation and authorizes positions for nursing positions and nursing training programthe Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke. Nongeneral fund appropriation for building improvements at the VVCC and Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond	NGF	\$5,100,000	No change	\$5,100,000	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 463	Veterans Care Centers: creates nongeneral fund appropriation and authorizes positions for the new Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center (Virginia Beach) and Puller Veterans Care Center (Fauquier County)	NGF	\$0	No change	\$12,000,000	No change

DVS	HB 30, Item 464	Benefits Services: funding and FTEs for five new Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs); salary adjustments for NoVa staff and attorneys	GF	\$528,000	Unallotted	\$732,000	Unallotted
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program: funding and FTEs for three new Peer Specialists	GF	\$341,000	Unallotted	\$341,000	Unallotted
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	Provides nongeneral fund appropriation to support a federal grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA)	NGF	\$3,000,000	No change	\$3,000,000	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP): funding and FTE for new VMSDEP program specialist	GF	\$83,140	Unallotted	\$110,853	Unallotted
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	V3 Employment Grant program - reduces funding for V3 grant awards from \$500,000 to \$100,000/year	GF	(\$400,000)	No change	(\$400,000)	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	Virginia Women Veterans Program: funding and FTE for new assistant program manager	GF	\$106,139	Unallotted	\$106,139	Unallotted
DVS	HB 30, Item 464	State Approving Agency (GI Bill program): nongeneral fund appropriation authorization and new FTE (program specialist)	NGF	\$106,139	No change	\$111,139	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 465	Operations/maintenance funding for new parking garage	GF	\$92,900	Unallotted	\$92,900	Unallotted
DVS	HB 30, Item 465	State Veterans Cemeteries: authorization for three NGF FTE	NGF	\$0	No change	\$0	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item 465	Virginia Veteran's Parade Field within the National Museum of the United States Army in Fairfax County (one-time)	GF	\$3,000,000	Unallotted	\$0	No change
DVS	HB30, Item 466	Transfers support funding and FTE from the Department of Veterans Services to the Veterans Services Foundation	GF	(\$230,000)	No change	(\$230,000)	No change
VSF	HB30, Item 468	Transfers support funding and FTE from the Department of Veterans Services to the Veterans Services Foundation	GF	\$230,000	No change	\$230,000	No change
DMA	HB 30, Item 469	Increase funding for tuition assistance for VaNG members	GF	\$250,000	Unallotted	\$250,000	Unallotted
DMA	HB30, Item 470	Increases the nongeneral fund appropriation for the Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Program	NGF	\$436,351	No change	\$436,351	No change

DMA	HB30, Item 470	Increases the nongeneral fund appropriation for the Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration (STARBASE) youth education program	NGF	\$139,000	No change	\$139,000	No change
DMA	HB30, Item 471	Increases the nongeneral fund appropriation of the Defense Preparedness Program	NGF	\$5,555,794	No change	\$5,555,794	No change
DVS	HB 30, Item C-61.60	Provide state matching funds for pandemic response renovations of veterans care centers	Bond	\$1,000,000	No change	\$0	No change
DMA	HB 30, Item C-62	Replace/Install Fire Safety Systems in Readiness Centers	Bond	\$3,000,000	No change	\$0	No change
DMA	HB 30, Item C-63	Construct Blackstone Army Air Field (BAAF) Fire Station	Bond	\$3,350,000	No change	\$0	No change

ATTACHMENT 6



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION **Report to the Board of Veterans Services** **June 10, 2020**

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held a virtual meeting on May 13, 2020.

Chair Finelli announced a need for additional funding as the close of FY20 approaches on June 30th. There have been some good wins thus far, but VSF is behind last year's pace, largely due to administrative shortfalls earlier in the year, and is now struggling to raise money during the COVID-19 crisis. Chair Finelli stated that though donations are down, needs are expected to increase with increased unemployment and other issues across the Veteran community.

Chair Finelli welcomed Commissioner John Maxwell. The Commissioner shared that the DVS mission remains the same and as an agency will need to be flexible and adaptable as DVS deals with the COVID-19 crisis. He also highlighted his priorities, to include transparency and pursuing a strong and vibrant network of support. Commission Maxwell is looking forward to working with the Foundation to meet the needs of Virginia veterans and their families.

Mr. John Lesinski, Development Committee Chair reported on the Giving Tuesday Campaign and VSF's need for a robust digital campaign. He also noted that giving is down as a result of COVID-19, but VSF continues to receive grass root donations. Mr. Lesinski expressed the need to develop an extensive email list to promote the Foundation and to solicit donations.

Senator Walter Stosch, Finance Committee Chair, reported that the VSF Board of Trustees has a fiduciary duty to its donors to ensure the donations are used prudently and for the designated purpose. Since the Finance Committee has not met, Mr. Stosch has monitored VSF's donor database and the financial reports provided by DVS to ensure the fiduciary responsibilities were met.

Mr. Jack Hilgers, P&P Chair reported that the P&P Committee is working with Chair Finelli, and DVS to update joint policies on fundraising, in-kind donations, fund management, and fund allocation and expenses.

Since the March 18th Board of Trustees meeting was canceled, the Trustee approved both the 2nd and 3rd FY20 quarterly financial reports. The Third Quarter report stated total income was \$385,133.52 with expenditures totaling \$260,126.55.

Mrs. Karla Boughy, VSF Executive Director announced that as of May 12, 2020 VSF had received \$409,620.00 in donations. This is about a \$200,000 drop from total donations received at the same time in FY19, due primarily to two corporate donations that are still being worked.

During this COVID-19 crisis, the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation finds itself in uncharted waters in preparing for the future. Donations have dropped drastically along with the possibility of a significant increase in the level of assistance Virginia Veterans will need. There is the distressing reality that an entirely new segment of the Veteran population may be facing critical behavioral health-related situations as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The Foundation remains committed to increasing donations to sustain the rate of expense and looks forward to working with Commissioner Maxwell and DVS. A strong collaboration between the Foundation and DVS will result in successfully assisting all Veterans and their families who are in need.

The Foundation welcomed Kyle Craig from Abingdon, Virginia to the Board of Trustees.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2020, and if allowed, will take place at the Virginia War Memorial. If it's not possible to hold an in person meeting, a virtual meeting will take place.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frank Finelli
Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation

ATTACHMENT 7.a

Overview of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families in Virginia

Background: In January 2019, Governor Northam committed Virginia to be one of the first seven states to implement the *Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge*. The *Challenge* is a call to action for state and local communities to implement the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [2018-2028 National Strategy for the Prevention of Veteran Suicide](#) and is guided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The aim of the National Strategy is to prevent suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) using a comprehensive public health approach. The Virginia Governor's Challenge is co-led by the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Carlos Hopkins, and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Dr. Daniel Carey, and has developed a strategic framework, which is currently being implemented state-wide.

Key Priorities for the Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge:

- Identify SMVF and screen for suicide risk;
- Promote connectedness and improve care transitions; and
- Increase lethal means safety and safety planning.

The Virginia Governor's Challenge team includes representatives from:

- Department of Veterans Affairs: VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) in Richmond (McGuire), Hampton, and Salem, Virginia; Washington D.C., Mountain Home (James H. Quillen), Tennessee; and Martinsburg, West Virginia. VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6);
- Department of Defense: Naval Medical Center Portsmouth;
- State Agencies: Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), Virginia National Guard, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, Virginia State Police, and Virginia Department of Education;
- Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association;
- National Alliance on Mental Illness;
- Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (Richmond Mayor's Suicide Prevention Challenge Lead); and
- Team Red, White, and Blue.

Virginia Governor's Challenge Themes: the "3Cs – Care, Connect, and Communicate":

- *Care:* The provision of accessible and culturally competent behavioral health services;
- *Connect:* Bringing SMVF-specific and community services together; forming systemic partnerships; and
- *Communicate:* Educating the SMVF population on resources and behavioral health providers on military culture and suicide prevention best practices.

Virginia Team Activity Highlights:

- Hosted regional crisis services strategic planning sessions (Crisis Intercept Mapping from SAMHSA) with Salem VAMC, Richmond VAMC, and Hampton VAMC. VHA partners were integral in the planning and implementation of these sessions, and ongoing support to regional teams;
- Hosted Regional Military Culture and Suicide Prevention Summits in: Radford, Abingdon, Fairfax, Lexington, Suffolk, and Henrico. Over 500 community services providers were trained at these inaugural events;
 - DVS now offers virtual Military Cultural Competency (MCC) webinars and has trained over 700 community services providers since March 2020. MCC webinar training also offered to state agency Human Resources (HR) leaders;
- Distributed the Veteran Crisis Line on Governor’s Challenge resource cards statewide to offices, agencies, Veterans Service Organizations, and care providers;
- Collaborated with the Department of Education and the *IServe2* campaign to raise awareness on needs and resources for military-connected children;
- Launched the *Together with Veterans* initiative (national best practice from VHA) in Southwest Virginia to bolster grass roots, veteran-led, suicide prevention in rural communities;
- Collaborated with the Virginia Army National Guard to revise the Suicide Prevention Training in a Warrior Task format that promotes core resiliency skills;
- Launched Virginia’s Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services (VISR) Pilot to:
 - Provide military culture, suicide prevention, and safety planning infrastructure in state and community agencies;
 - Enhance suicide risk screening and resource connectivity for SMVF before a crisis and the delivery of life saving services in a crisis;
- Hosted online training on the Columbia Suicide Risk Screening protocol from Columbia University to increase utilization in community settings;
- Launched suicide awareness campaign with General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus;
- Submitted cross-agency budget requests for State FY21/FY22 (pending due to COVID):
 - DBHDS – to enhance trauma-informed clinical capacity in Community Services Boards (CSBs) to provide outpatient mental health services to SMVF;
 - To expand *Lock and Talk Virginia* Lethal Means Safety Campaign to additional CSBs and National Guard;
 - DVS – to expand peer and family support and benefits services; and
- Distributed COVID-19 safety and resource information and collaborate regularly to increase access to care during this pandemic.

Partnerships to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF:

- The Virginia Team is actively engaged at Federal, State and local levels to prevent suicide among the SMVF population.
 - **Everyone has a role in suicide prevention.**

For more information, please contact:

Brandi Jancaitis, MPH

Military and Veterans Affairs Manager

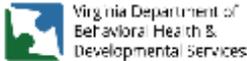
Division of Behavioral Health Community Services

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

brandi.jancaitis@dbhds.virginia.gov

804-937-1283

ATTACHMENT 7.b



Virginia Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Military Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF)

Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services (VTSR) Pilot

Background:

Virginia is 1 of 7 States to join the Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through a call to action for state and local communities to implement the VA's [2018-2028 National Strategy for the Prevention of Veteran Suicide](#). The aim of the National Strategy is to prevent suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) using a comprehensive public health approach.

Virginia has the 8th largest veteran population (approximately 715,000 of our citizens) and 2nd largest active duty population (approximately 131,000 of our citizens) in the Nation. In addition, there are approximately 17,000 Reserve component and 8,700 Virginia National Guard (Army and Air components) Service Members in Virginia. Virginia also has the largest number of military-connected children in the Nation in our public schools. Military-connected individuals (including family members, caregivers, and loved ones) are an important part of all of our communities.

Of the 19.9 million veterans in the United States, only 30 percent use VA healthcare services; 70% of veterans utilize community settings for health and behavioral healthcare, or go without such care. However, many community (non-VHA) behavioral health providers are unaware of the number of veterans they are serving and the resources available to them. According to the "Ready to Serve" study conducted by RAND (2014), only 8% of community providers reported high military cultural competency.¹

Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2017 (47,173 suicide deaths). Veterans accounted for approximately 22 percent of the deaths. Nationwide, more than 6,000 veterans died by suicide each year from 2008-2017. On average, the VA estimates that 17 veterans die by suicide every day (2017); 11 were not connected with the VA for healthcare prior to their deaths.²

From 2003 to 2017, more than 3,250 veterans or service members died by suicide in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The use of a firearm is the lethal means in most veteran suicide deaths with 72% dying by firearm compared to approximately 50% for civilians.³

The most dangerous time for a person who has been hospitalized for a suicidal crisis is the initial 30 days post hospitalization.⁴ Of patients who discharge from an emergency room after a suicide attempt, up to 70 percent do not attend their first outpatient appointment (Knesper).

¹ Tanielian, T., Farris, C., Epley, C., Farmer, C., Robinson, E., Engel, C., Robbins, M., Jaycox, L. (2014). Ready to serve. RAND.

² 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/data.asp.

³ Virginia Violent Death Reporting System, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Virginia Department of Health. A National Violent Death Reporting System project. <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiners/fatality-review-surveillance-programs-reports/virginia-violent-death-reporting-system>.

⁴ Knesper, D. J. (2011). Continuity of care for suicide prevention and research: Suicide attempts and suicide deaths subsequent to discharge from the emergency department or psychiatry inpatient unit. Newton, MA: Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

VA healthcare has instituted practices to support Veterans' care transitions post suicide-attempt crisis, including Suicide Prevention Safety Planning in the Emergency Department, post-discharge engagement (caring) contacts after hospitalizations, and the High Risk Patient Record Flag system, with 90 days of enhanced care management.

Theme of Virginia Governor's Challenge is the "3Cs – Care, Connect, and Communicate":

- **Care:** The provision of accessible and culturally competent behavioral health services.
- **Connect:** Bringing military/veteran specific and community services together; forming systemic partnerships.
- **Communicate:** Educating Service Members, Veterans, and their Families on resources and educating community services providers on military culture and suicide prevention best practices.

Activities for VISR Pilot participants:

- Identify Service Members, Veterans, and Family members (SMVF) at intake for services. Staff should ask *"Have you or a Family Member ever served in the U.S. Military?"* Track number of SMVF identified.
 - When possible, collect military status (Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard), veteran status, and family member status.
- Offer military culture, suicide prevention, and safety planning training to direct services staff and track training completion.
 - *A training resource list with free and low cost options will be provided.*
- Screen identified SMVF for suicide risk. Track number of SMVF screened and risk level.
 - If identified SMVF are at risk of suicide, provide immediate safety planning and link to crisis care resources.
 - *Information on suicide risk screening tool options will be provided.*
- Provide resource referrals to identified SMVF to Veterans Health Administration, Military Treatment Facility and/or Virginia Department of Veterans Services if applicable.
 - *Resource information to facilitate referrals will be provided.*
- Provide all identified SMVF with a Military/Veteran Crisis Line and Virginia Veteran and Family Support resource cards.
 - Resource cards will be provided.
- If the agency provides inpatient behavioral health care, establish a discharge planning and caring contact partnership with nearest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Facility to streamline follow-on care for eligible veterans at discharge.
 - *Connections to VA Health Care Facilities will be provided in order to facilitate referrals.*

The Governor's Challenge Pilot Workgroup will assist each agency with training resources and data reporting (reports will be due every other month with 3 total reporting periods).

VISR Pilot Timeline: Enroll by November 30, 2019; Screening by February 1, 2020; and Pilot Data Collection/Sustainability Planning by September 1, 2020.

For questions and to enroll, **contact Brandi Jancaitis, Military and Veterans Affairs Manager for DBHDS** at brandi.jancaitis@dbhds.virginia.gov. Please identify an agency lead to participate in monthly meetings. *Note: there is no monetary award for Pilot activities.*