



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

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Commissioner

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December 1, 2022

The Honorable Glenn A. Youngkin
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Craig C. Crenshaw
Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable C. Todd Gilbert
Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
President Pro Tempore, Senate of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Delivered via electronic mail

Re: 2022 Annual Report of the Virginia Military Spouse Liaison

Dear Governor Youngkin, Secretary Crenshaw, Delegate Gilbert, and Senator Lucas:

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Virginia Military Spouse Liaison (MSL) serves as the Commonwealth's military spouse advocate in accordance with §2.2-2002.2 of the Code of Virginia. In this role, the MSL collaborates with key stakeholders within federal, state, local government, military installations, and the private sector to develop and implement a resource system to provide access to employment, childcare, licensure, and community resources. The MSL is also responsible for outreach and provides advocacy for military families. The Military Spouse Liaison gives a voice to military spouses within the Commonwealth to make Virginia the most veteran and military spouse friendly state.

This year, one of the program's primary objectives was to establish partnerships to expand outreach to military spouses across the Commonwealth, informing them of all the services and opportunities Virginia offers. These partners included veteran service organizations, employers, community leaders, military installations, and local, state, and federal agencies.

The second objective for the MSL was to promote resources, referrals, and information available to military spouses at events, community engagement meetings, and one-on-one

interactions. Areas of focus were childcare, licensure reciprocity, employment, and other spouse benefits.

Of the many activities and efforts conducted by the MSL this year, a few are highlighted in this report:

- Participated in a research series by The Center for a New American Security's Military, Veterans, and Society (CNAS MVS) program focusing on impacts for military spouse employment associated with a shift to remote work. The CNAS MVS program hosted a series of four working groups exploring the future of military spouse remote employment from the perspective of those serving military spouses, Fortune-500 employers, small business owners, and policymakers. The MSL provided information on the VDVS services and resources available throughout the Commonwealth.
- Briefed employers attending the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Employer Certification. During the training, the Liaison spoke on the strengths a military spouse can bring to their organizations. The MSL also attended MilspouseFest in Norfolk which had over 50 military spouses in attendance. The Liaison connected with employers and resource organizations to assist military spouses with employment, mental health, and community resources.
- Initiated an agency-wide "Purple Up Day" on April 13 in support of Month of the Military Child. On Purple Up Day, VDVS Staff across the state wore purple and submitted photos to show comradery and support of the 200,000+ military children living in Virginia.
- Worked with the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zones (MSEEZ) in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads on their pillars of Hire, Train, and Advocate for the military spouse community. Both MSEEZ are comprised of local government, employers, community leaders, military organizations, and other stakeholders wanting to help the military spouse community in employment.
- Joined First Lady of Virginia Suzanne Youngkin and Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Jason Pak at the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Headquarters in Arlington. The team received a tour of the newly renovated headquarters, high-level briefing of the mission of TAPS, and met three Gold Star Spouses. First Lady Youngkin presented a signed copy of Governor Youngkin's proclamation recognizing April 5 as Gold Star Spouses Day in Virginia and informed the TAPS team of the passing of House Bill 957; classification of real property owned by certain surviving spouses for tax purposes

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Military Spouse Cumulative Metrics for FY22

Military Spouse Outreach*	537
Military Spouse Partner Engagement ⁺	311
Outreach/Community Events	40

**Military Spouse Outreach was made through the VDVS appointment line, email, outreach events, and newsletter dissemination.*

⁺Military Spouse Partners are community leaders, employers, advocates, military installations, and other stakeholders wanting to assist the military spouse community.

The Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.1(D) directs that VDVS report annually program results to the Governor, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and the General Assembly.

Please let me know if we may provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Daniel M. Gade, PhD

Cc: Mr. Michael Dick, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
Ms. Denice Williams, Chair, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations