



## 2022 State Legislative Wrap Up – Committee on Veterans

The 2022 state legislative session has ended, and several actions were taken by the legislature that may be of interest to your committee. Any memoranda drafted by the committee in support or opposition to legislation was shared by the Government Relations team to the key relevant legislators and the team will continue its advocacy on these matters in the off-session.

### Committee Legislative Engagement in 2022 Session:

- **Veteran Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day** (S4093/A6975) Establishes September 22 of each year as “Veteran Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day”. The committee issued [memorandum in support](#) of this legislation. The legislation passed the Senate and remains in the Assembly’s governmental operations committee.

### 2022 Budget Legislation:

- **Department of Veterans’ Services** (S8006C/A8006C Part PP Article 1) Establishes the Department of Veterans’ Services in New York State and appoints a commissioner of veterans’ services who is required to be a veteran.
- **Veterans’ Service Commission** (S8006C/A8006C Part PP Article 1) Establishes a Veterans’ Service Commission to be composed of thirteen veterans appointed by the Governor.
- **Veterans’ Employment Act** (S8006C/A8006C Part PP Article 2) Declares it to be the policy of the state that temporary appointments in state agencies be filled by veterans (instead of using temporary staffing firms).

### Legislation that passed both houses

- **Expansion of the Veterans’ Suicide Task Force** (A8728/S7804) Provides technical amendments to Chapter 770 of the laws of 2021. Increases number of members to 13 [from 9] for the Veterans’ Suicide Task Force, adding the Commissioner of the Office of Mental Health, the Director of the Division of Veterans’ Services, the Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and the Commissioner of Health, or their designees. This legislation was signed into law on February 24, 2022. Effective February 20, 2022.
- **Retirement Benefits for Discharged LGBTQ Veterans** (A5278B/S6022B) Amends the Retirement Law to ensure discharged LGBTQ veterans are eligible for the States Military Buyback Program. This legislation awaits delivery to the governor. If signed, this bill will take effect one year after it is signed into law.
- **National Guard Member and Family Benefit Information Access** (A5832A/S666A) Requires Division of Military and Naval Affairs to make information on benefits for members of the National

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Guard and their families available on the Division's website and in printed form. This legislation awaits delivery to the governor. If signed it will take effect 60 days after becoming law.

- **Veterans' Memorial Registry** (A9590/S8729) Directs the Division of Veterans' Services to create an online searchable registry of all military memorials located in New York State. This legislation awaits delivery to the governor. If signed it will take effect one year after becoming law.
- **Permanent Extension of Time Limitations (Vietnam War Chemical Exposure)** (A3582A/S9076) Permanently extend court actions to be brought related to injury or death as a consequence of exposure to phenoxy herbicides ("Agent Orange") at any time by anyone who served the armed forces in Indo-China during the period of 11/1/1955 to 5/7/1975. This legislation awaits delivery to the governor. If signed it will take effect immediately.

#### **Chapter amendments to legislation passed in 2021:**

- **Reporting Veteran Suicide** (S7738/A8715) Chapter amendment to Chapter 657 of the laws of 2021. Expands definition of "veteran" to clarify for coroners, coroner's physicians, and medical examiners which instances of suicide should be reported, and changes the developing agency for the reporting form from the Division of Veterans' Services to the Department of Health. Signed into law February 24, 2022. Effective June 7, 2022.
- **Access to Benefits** (S7706/A8729) Chapter amendment to Chapter 609 of the laws of 2021. Adds more inclusive and expansive language relating to veterans addressing questions on intake forms at certain facilities. Signed into law February 24, 2022. Effective March 11, 2022.
- **Expanding Task Force on Veteran Employment Opportunities** (S7713/A8730) Chapter amendment to Chapter 607 of the laws of 2021. Increases number of members of task force on veteran employment opportunities from eleven to thirteen, requires governor to appoint two additional members, with at least one representative being from the private sector. Signed into law February 24, 2022. Effective January 10, 2022.

#### **Other legislation relevant to the committee's interests:**

- **Employment Protections During Active Duty in National Guard** (S5542/A9357) Expands employment protections for national guard members during state active duty. This legislation passed the Senate and remains in the Assembly governmental operations committee.
- **Veteran Exemption from Business Incorporation Fees** (S1504/A7317) Waives business incorporation fees for Veterans honorably discharged within five years of establishing their business. This legislation passed the Senate, and remains in the Assembly's corporations, authorities and commissions committee.
- **Reporting and Improving Resources for Service-Connected Disabilities** (A6874A/S180A) Directs veterans' service commission to work with the state chief disability officer to develop a report reviewing services for veterans with service-connected disabilities and make recommendations for implementing a statewide program to support veterans with service-related disabilities. This legislation passed the Assembly and remains in the Senate's veterans, homeland security, and military affairs committee.

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