



100TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2017 and 2018

HB2656

by Rep. Stephanie A. Kifowit

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 2805/2h new

Amends the Department of Veterans Affairs Act. Contains provisions concerning the establishment of various programs and services for the benefit of veterans including an educational success program for veterans experiencing specified difficulties in higher education; a family preparation course for the families of returning veterans; a transition program for returning veterans that reside in the State; a system that allows veterans to file a specified federal form immediately upon discharge; creation of an employer training program; and a standard statewide peer-to-peer training program to familiarize veterans with the veterans' services available at the local, State, and federal levels. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to adopt any rules necessary to implement these provisions.

LRB100 08183 MJP 18279 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act is
5 amended by adding Section 2h as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/2h new)

7 Sec. 2h. Task Force on Veterans' Suicide recommendations.
8 The provisions of this Section are based on the recommendations
9 in the final report of the Task Force on Veterans' Suicide,
10 published on December 30, 2016. The Department shall adopt any
11 rules necessary to implement this Section.

12 (1) The Department shall collaborate with institutions
13 of higher education to address environmental factors that
14 could negatively impact a veteran's ability to learn in a
15 traditional classroom setting. Such factors include, but
16 are not limited to, expanding veterans' access to online
17 learning; desk placement away from windows, crowded
18 hallways, or orientation; grouping veterans together in a
19 class; and veterans' only instructional periods. The
20 Department, in coordination with institutions of higher
21 education, shall provide proactive outreach as part of an
22 educational success program for veterans experiencing
23 difficulties in higher education due to undiagnosed mental

1 health issues that prevent them from succeeding.

2 (2) The Department shall provide a family preparation
3 course concerning the emotional cycle of deployment that is
4 designed to help a family unit adjust to changes in
5 discharged and returning veterans and inform the family
6 members of where to go to seek assistance. This course
7 shall be made available to the family of a veteran prior to
8 the discharge and homecoming of the veteran.

9 (3) The Department shall reach out to the United States
10 Department of Defense to obtain information on returning
11 veterans and develop a transition program for returning
12 veterans that reside in the State. The program developed
13 under this paragraph shall include a veteran-to-veteran
14 connection program and information on local organizations
15 that provide resources or services for veterans that a
16 veteran can access.

17 (4) The Department shall reach out to the United States
18 Department of Defense in order to develop a system that
19 allows veterans to file a federal DD Form 214 immediately
20 upon discharge.

21 (5) The Department shall collaborate with chambers of
22 commerce in the State to create an employer training
23 program that focuses on the needs of employees that are
24 veterans. The Department shall develop a program that
25 identifies companies that are trained on the circumstances
26 that are unique to veterans seeking employment and that

1 support employees that are veterans.

2 (6) The Department, in collaboration with veterans'
3 organizations in the State, shall establish a standard
4 statewide peer-to-peer training program to familiarize
5 veterans with the veterans' services available at the
6 local, State, and federal levels.