



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB3226

Introduced 2/17/2023, by Rep. Lindsey LaPointe

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Veterans I.O.U. Act. Provides that the General Assembly finds that veterans are owed a debt of gratitude for their service; that there is a known and large gap between veterans and their awareness of the resources, services, and benefits available to them, especially in times of need; and that closing this gap begins with being able to identify a veteran, which can eliminate the disconnect between a veteran and the resources, services, and benefits the veteran may need. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to develop, by rule, standards for identifying veterans and making them aware of resources, services, and benefits that veterans may need. Provides that the rules shall require State agencies, local government agencies, as well as licensed individuals and entities, to ask an individual at the point of initial contact if the individual has ever served in any branch of the military of the United States, including the National Guard, reserve, or active duty. Defines "points of contact" to include, but not be limited to, stops by law enforcement, arrest and booking, emergency room visits, visits to food pantries, and visits to homeless shelters. Provides that if an individual affirmatively answers at the point of contact that the individual is a veteran, the veteran shall be offered information and outreach in accordance with the Department's standards. Requires outreach by the Department to commence within 48 hours after the initial contact and to include, but not be limited to: information regarding available resources, services, and benefits; assistance in contacting providers of the resources, services, and benefits; assistance in enrolling in the resources, services, and benefits; and where available, support for the veteran's family. Provides that outreach regarding resources, services, and benefits shall not be limited to resources of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Requires State agencies, local government agencies, and licensed individuals and entities to comply with the Department's standards that apply to them. Grants the Department rulemaking authority and requires State agencies, local government agencies, and licensed individuals and entities to comply with those rules.

LRB103 29918 KTG 56331 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning government.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Veterans I.O.U. Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. Each of us owes a debt of gratitude to
7 veterans for their service, no matter when or where that took
8 place. However, veterans themselves, particularly women
9 veterans, do not always identify as veterans. As a result,
10 there is a known and large gap between veterans and their
11 awareness of the resources, services, and benefits available
12 to them, especially in times of need. Closing this gap begins
13 with being able to identify a veteran, which can eliminate the
14 disconnect between a veteran and the resources, services, and
15 benefits the veteran may need.

16 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

17 "Department" means the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

18 "Licensed individuals and entities" includes individuals
19 and entities that are licensed by the State or a local
20 government agency and have been identified by the Department
21 of Veterans' Affairs, by rule, as individuals and entities
22 that come into contact with veterans who may benefit from

1 available services and benefits.

2 "Points of initial contact" means points, to be determined
3 by the Department by rule, at which State agencies, local
4 government agencies, and licensed individuals and entities may
5 come into initial contact with veterans who may need
6 resources, services, and benefits. Points of initial contact
7 include, but are not limited to, stops by law enforcement,
8 arrest and booking, emergency room visits, visits to food
9 pantries, and visits to homeless shelters.

10 "State agencies" and "local government agencies" have the
11 meanings given to those terms in Article I of the Illinois
12 State Auditing Act.

13 "Veteran" means an individual who has served as a member
14 of the armed forces of the United States, the Illinois
15 National Guard, or a reserve component of the armed forces of
16 the United States, and includes members on active duty.

17 Section 15. Development of standards. The Department of
18 Veterans' Affairs shall develop, by rule, standards for
19 identifying veterans and making them aware of resources,
20 services, and benefits that veterans may need. The rules shall
21 require State agencies, local government agencies, as well as
22 licensed individuals and entities, to ask the following
23 question at the point of initial contact with an individual:

24 "Have you served, at any time, in any branch of the
25 military of the United States, including the National Guard,

1 reserve, or active duty?"

2 If an individual answers in the affirmative, the veteran
3 shall be offered information and outreach in accordance with
4 the Department's standards. Outreach shall be coordinated by
5 the Department and shall commence within 48 hours after the
6 initial contact. Outreach includes, but is not limited to:
7 information regarding available resources, services, and
8 benefits; assistance in contacting providers of the resources,
9 services, and benefits; and assistance in enrolling in the
10 resources, services, and benefits. Where available, support
11 shall also be offered for the veteran's family. Outreach
12 regarding resources, services, and benefits shall not be
13 limited to resources of the U.S. Department of Veterans
14 Affairs.

15 State agencies, local government agencies, and licensed
16 individuals and entities must comply with the Department's
17 standards that apply to them. The Department shall encourage
18 other appropriate entities to follow those standards.

19 Section 20. Rules. The Department shall adopt rules to
20 carry out its responsibilities under this Act. State agencies,
21 local government agencies, and licensed individuals and
22 entities shall comply with those rules.