

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 changing Sections 2 and 8 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2805/2) (from Ch. 126 1/2, par. 67)

7 Sec. 2. Powers and duties. The Department shall have the
8 following powers and duties:

9 To perform such acts at the request of any veteran, or his
10 or her spouse, surviving spouse or dependents as shall be
11 reasonably necessary or reasonably incident to obtaining or
12 endeavoring to obtain for the requester any advantage, benefit
13 or emolument accruing or due to such person under any law of
14 the United States, the State of Illinois or any other state or
15 governmental agency by reason of the service of such veteran,
16 and in pursuance thereof shall:

17 (1) Contact veterans, their survivors and dependents
18 and advise them of the benefits of state and federal laws
19 and assist them in obtaining such benefits;

20 (2) Establish field offices and direct the activities
21 of the personnel assigned to such offices;

22 (3) Create a volunteer field force of accredited
23 representatives, representing educational institutions,

1 labor organizations, veterans organizations, employers,
2 churches, and farm organizations;

3 (4) Conduct informational and training services;

4 (5) Conduct educational programs through newspapers,
5 periodicals and radio for the specific purpose of
6 disseminating information affecting veterans and their
7 dependents;

8 (6) Coordinate the services and activities of all state
9 departments having services and resources affecting
10 veterans and their dependents;

11 (7) Encourage and assist in the coordination of
12 agencies within counties giving service to veterans and
13 their dependents;

14 (8) Cooperate with veterans organizations and other
15 governmental agencies;

16 (9) Make, alter, amend and promulgate reasonable rules
17 and procedures for the administration of this Act;

18 (10) Make and publish annual reports to the Governor
19 regarding the administration and general operation of the
20 Department;

21 (11) (Blank); and

22 (12) (Blank). ~~Conduct an annual review of the benefits~~
23 ~~received by Illinois veterans that compares benefits~~
24 ~~received by Illinois veterans with the benefits received by~~
25 ~~veterans in all other states and U.S. territories. The~~
26 ~~required annual review shall include, but not be limited~~

1 ~~to, (1) the average benefit paid to individual veterans~~
2 ~~from Illinois, in direct comparison to the average benefit~~
3 ~~paid to individual veterans of each of the other states and~~
4 ~~U.S. territories; (2) the number of veterans receiving~~
5 ~~benefits in Illinois for the first time during the year~~
6 ~~compared to the number of claims filed by Illinois veterans~~
7 ~~during the year; (3) the aggregate number of Illinois~~
8 ~~veterans receiving benefits compared to the number of~~
9 ~~veterans from each of the other states and U.S. territories~~
10 ~~receiving benefits; and (4) a categorical analysis of the~~
11 ~~types of injuries and disabilities for which benefits are~~
12 ~~being paid in Illinois and each of the other states and~~
13 ~~U.S. territories. The benefits review shall be reported to~~
14 ~~the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Illinois~~
15 ~~Congressional delegation upon the completion of the report~~
16 ~~each year.~~

17 The Department may accept and hold on behalf of the State,
18 if for the public interest, a grant, gift, devise or bequest of
19 money or property to the Department made for the general
20 benefit of Illinois veterans, including the conduct of
21 informational and training services by the Department and other
22 authorized purposes of the Department. The Department shall
23 cause each grant, gift, devise or bequest to be kept as a
24 distinct fund and shall invest such funds in the manner
25 provided by the Public Funds Investment Act, as now or
26 hereafter amended, and shall make such reports as may be

1 required by the Comptroller concerning what funds are so held
2 and the manner in which such funds are invested. The Department
3 may make grants from these funds for the general benefit of
4 Illinois veterans. Grants from these funds, except for the
5 funds established under Sections 2.01a and 2.03, shall be
6 subject to appropriation.

7 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds
8 appropriated from the Korean War Veterans National Museum and
9 Library Fund, to private organizations for the benefit of the
10 Korean War Veterans National Museum and Library.

11 The Department has the power to make grants, from funds
12 appropriated from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, for
13 benefits authorized under the Survivors Compensation Act.

14 (Source: P.A. 97-297, eff. 1-1-12.)

15 (20 ILCS 2805/8)

16 Sec. 8. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Outpatient
17 Counseling Program. Subject to appropriations for that
18 purpose, the Department, in consultation with the Department of
19 Human Services, shall contract with professional counseling
20 specialists to provide a range of confidential counseling and
21 direct treatment services to war-affected Southwest Asia
22 combat veterans and their family members, and to provide
23 additional treatment services to Viet Nam War veterans for
24 post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly those Viet Nam
25 veterans whose post-traumatic stress disorder has intensified

1 or initially emerged due to the war in the Middle East. Any
2 such contracts entered into by the Department must be with
3 individuals and entities pre-approved by the U.S. Department of
4 Veterans Affairs and must be for the provision of services
5 pre-approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In
6 consultation with the Department of Human Services, the
7 Department shall, to the extent funds are available:

8 (1) develop an educational program designed to inform
9 and train primary health care professionals, including
10 mental health professionals, about the effects of
11 war-related stress and trauma;

12 (2) provide informational and counseling services for
13 the purpose of establishing and fostering peer-support
14 networks throughout the State for families of deployed
15 members of the reserves and the Illinois National Guard;
16 and

17 (3) provide for veterans' families a referral network
18 of mental health providers who are skilled in treating
19 deployment stress, combat stress, and post-traumatic
20 stress.

21 As used in this Section, "Southwest Asia combat veteran"
22 means an Illinois resident who is, or who was honorably
23 discharged as, a member of the Armed Forces of the United
24 States, a member of the Illinois National Guard, or a member of
25 any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States
26 and who served on active duty in connection with Operation

1 Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation Iraqi
2 Freedom.

3 (Source: P.A. 95-576, eff. 8-31-07.)

4 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
5 becoming law.