

HOUSE BILL 1275

P1

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CF SB 857

By: **Delegates Vogt, Brooks, Folden, C. Wilson, and P. Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2017

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Department of Veterans Affairs – Veterans’ Services**
3 **Specialists**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring units of State government to designate an employee of the
5 unit as a veterans’ services specialist to coordinate services with the director of the
6 veterans Outreach and Advocacy Program in the Department of Veterans Affairs
7 and attend certain training, to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with
8 certain information, and to post certain information on the unit’s Web site; requiring
9 certain governmental units to direct veterans to contact the Department and provide
10 the veterans with certain contact information; requiring the Department to
11 coordinate certain meetings and submit a certain report; and generally relating to
12 veterans’ services specialists at units of State government.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
14 Article – State Government
15 Section 9–943
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

18 BY adding to
19 Article – State Government
20 Section 9–944
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
24 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

25 **Article – State Government**

26 9–943.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (a) (1) For the purposes of reaching any veteran, veteran's dependent, or
2 veteran's survivor in need of assistance in obtaining services or benefits granted by the law,
3 the director shall develop and implement an outreach plan.

4 (2) In order to carry out the director's responsibilities under paragraph (1)
5 of this subsection, the director may:

6 (i) enter into contracts; and

7 (ii) work with governmental units and community-based
8 organizations, including the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department
9 of Aging, faith-based groups, veterans groups, senior centers, adult day care centers,
10 institutions of higher education, and other entities the director considers appropriate.

11 (b) (1) The director shall develop mechanisms for outreach to be disseminated
12 by direct mail and through community-based veterans organizations, the Department of
13 Veterans Affairs, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Health and
14 Mental Hygiene, and any other State agency or unit the director considers appropriate.

15 (2) The mechanisms for outreach shall include:

16 (i) the development of a pamphlet describing the services provided
17 by the Outreach and Advocacy Program;

18 (ii) a regular newsletter;

19 (iii) brochures describing various benefits or any other issue or
20 benefit of interest to veterans or their dependents; and

21 (iv) other measures the director considers appropriate.

22 (c) The Department shall develop and maintain a database of veterans in the
23 State.

24 (d) The Department, in conjunction with the types of community-based
25 organizations listed in subsection (a)(2) of this section, shall develop a survey to assist in
26 identifying veterans and dependents who may be eligible for pension programs.

27 (e) The Program shall:

28 (1) in conjunction with other governmental units and community-based
29 groups, seek out veterans and their dependents who may be eligible for pension program
30 benefits; and

31 (2) provide wounded or disabled veterans with information on available
32 services and benefits and support in obtaining these services and benefits.

1 9-944.

2 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "SPECIALIST" MEANS AN EMPLOYEE DESIGNATED BY
3 A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESPONDING TO AND ASSISTING
4 VETERANS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE UNIT OR WHO CONTACT THE UNIT FOR
5 ASSISTANCE.

6 (B) EACH GOVERNMENTAL UNIT SHALL:

7 (1) DESIGNATE AN EMPLOYEE OF THE UNIT, WHO TO THE EXTENT
8 PRACTICABLE IS A VETERAN, AS A VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST FOR THE UNIT
9 AND WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDE THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES WITH
10 THE DEPARTMENT;

11 (2) PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH ANY NONPROTECTED OR
12 NONPRIVATE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES THE UNIT PROVIDES TO VETERANS;
13 AND

14 (3) POST ON THE UNIT'S WEB SITE:

15 (I) ALL SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS FROM THE UNIT;

16 (II) THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE UNIT'S VETERANS'
17 SERVICES SPECIALIST; AND

18 (III) A LINK TO THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE CONTACT
19 INFORMATION FOR THE DIRECTOR OF THE OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM
20 IN THE DEPARTMENT.

21 (C) THE VETERANS' SERVICES SPECIALIST SHALL:

22 (1) COORDINATE THE PROVISION OF VETERANS' SERVICES
23 AVAILABLE THROUGH THE UNIT WITH THE DEPARTMENT; AND

24 (2) ATTEND ANNUAL TRAINING THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES
25 CONCERNING THE COORDINATION OF VETERANS' SERVICES.

26 (D) ON REQUEST FOR SERVICES BY A VETERAN, A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT
27 THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS SHALL DIRECT THE VETERAN TO
28 CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT AND PROVIDE THE VETERAN WITH THE DEPARTMENT
29 CONTACT INFORMATION.

1 **(E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:**

2 **(1) COORDINATE A MEETING EACH QUARTER, OR AS OTHERWISE**
3 **NECESSARY, WITH GOVERNMENTAL UNITS TO DISCUSS AND RECEIVE INFORMATION**
4 **CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION;**
5 **AND**

6 **(2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 15 EACH YEAR, REPORT ON THE**
7 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION TO THE GOVERNOR**
8 **AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.**

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
10 October 1, 2017.