

**SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETIETH SESSION**

S.F. No. 1316

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DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
02/22/2017	708	Introduction and first reading
		Referred to Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy
03/23/2017		Comm report: To pass as amended and re-refer to Finance

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to military and veterans affairs; appropriating funds to the Departments

1.3 of Military and Veterans Affairs; modifying uses for Support Our Troops account;

1.4 requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a policy to grant free or

1.5 reduced-cost burials in state veterans cemeteries to eligible indigent dependents

1.6 of veterans; amending Minnesota Statutes 2016, sections 190.19, subdivisions 2,

1.7 2a; 197.236, subdivision 9.

1.8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.9 **ARTICLE 1**

1.10 **VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS**

1.11 Section 1. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

1.12 The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are appropriated to the agencies

1.13 and for the purposes specified in this article. The appropriations are from the general fund,

1.14 or another named fund, and are available for the fiscal years indicated for each purpose.

1.15 The figures "2018" and "2019" used in this article mean that the appropriations listed under

1.16 them are available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, or June 30, 2019, respectively.

1.17 "The first year" is fiscal year 2018. "The second year" is fiscal year 2019. "The biennium"

1.18 is fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

1.19	<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>	
1.20	<u>Available for the Year</u>	
1.21	<u>Ending June 30</u>	
1.22	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>

1.23 Sec. 2. **MILITARY AFFAIRS**

1.24 <u>Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>19,616,000</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>19,616,000</u>
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2.1 The amounts that may be spent for each
 2.2 purpose are specified in the following
 2.3 subdivisions.

2.4 Subd. 2. **Maintenance of Training Facilities** 6,661,000 6,661,000

2.5 Subd. 3. **General Support** 2,607,000 2,607,000

2.6 Subd. 4. **Enlistment Incentives** 10,348,000 10,348,000

2.7 **Appropriation Availability.** If appropriations
 2.8 for either year of the biennium are insufficient,
 2.9 the appropriation from the other year is
 2.10 available. The appropriations for enlistment
 2.11 incentives are available until expended.

2.12 Sec. 3. **VETERANS AFFAIRS**

2.13 Subdivision 1. **Total Appropriation** \$ 74,384,000 \$ 74,384,000

2.14 Appropriations by Fund

2.15 2018 2019

2.16 General 74,179,000 74,179,000

2.17 Special Revenue 205,000 195,000

2.18 The amounts that may be spent for each
 2.19 purpose are specified in the following
 2.20 subdivisions.

2.21 Subd. 2. **Veterans Programs and Services** 17,166,000 17,156,000

2.22 Appropriations by Fund

2.23 2018 2019

2.24 General 16,961,000 16,961,000

2.25 Special Revenue 205,000 195,000

2.26 **Veterans Service Organizations.** \$353,000

2.27 each year is for grants to the following
 2.28 congressionally chartered veterans service
 2.29 organizations, as designated by the
 2.30 commissioner: Disabled American Veterans,
 2.31 Military Order of the Purple Heart, the
 2.32 American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars,
 2.33 Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, and

3.1 Paralyzed Veterans of America. This funding
3.2 must be allocated in direct proportion to the
3.3 funding currently being provided by the
3.4 commissioner to these organizations.

3.5 **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans.**

3.6 \$750,000 each year is for a grant to the
3.7 Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
3.8 to provide assistance throughout Minnesota
3.9 to veterans and their families who are
3.10 homeless or in danger of homelessness,
3.11 including assistance with the following:

3.12 (1) utilities;

3.13 (2) employment; and

3.14 (3) legal issues.

3.15 The assistance authorized under this paragraph
3.16 must be made only to veterans who have
3.17 resided in Minnesota for 30 days prior to
3.18 application for assistance and according to
3.19 other guidelines established by the
3.20 commissioner. In order to avoid duplication
3.21 of services, the commissioner must ensure that
3.22 this assistance is coordinated with all other
3.23 available programs for veterans.

3.24 **Honor Guards.** \$200,000 each year is for
3.25 compensation for honor guards at the funerals
3.26 of veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section
3.27 197.231.

3.28 **Minnesota GI Bill.** \$200,000 each year is for
3.29 the costs of administering the Minnesota GI
3.30 Bill postsecondary educational benefits,
3.31 on-the-job training, and apprenticeship
3.32 program under Minnesota Statutes, section
3.33 197.791. Of this amount, \$100,000 is for
3.34 transfer to the Office of Higher Education.

4.1 **Gold Star Program.** \$100,000 each year is
4.2 for administering the Gold Star Program for
4.3 surviving family members of deceased
4.4 veterans.

4.5 **County Veterans Service Office.** \$1,100,000
4.6 each year is for funding the County Veterans
4.7 Service Office grant program under Minnesota
4.8 Statutes, section 197.608.

4.9 **Veterans' Voices.** \$25,000 in fiscal year 2018
4.10 and \$25,000 in fiscal year 2019 are for a grant
4.11 to the Association of Minnesota Public
4.12 Educational Radio Stations for statewide
4.13 programming to promote the Veterans' Voices
4.14 program. The Veterans' Voices program shall
4.15 educate and engage communities regarding
4.16 veterans' contributions, knowledge, skills, and
4.17 experiences with an emphasis on Korean War
4.18 veterans and Operation Desert Storm veterans.
4.19 These appropriations are from the Support Our
4.20 Troops account in the special revenue fund.
4.21 This is a onetime appropriation and is not
4.22 added to the base.

4.23 **Veterans Defense Project.** \$90,000 in fiscal
4.24 year 2018 and \$85,000 in fiscal year 2019 are
4.25 for grants to the Veterans Defense Project.
4.26 The Veterans Defense Project must use the
4.27 grant money to support, through education,
4.28 outreach, and legal assistance, military
4.29 veterans who are involved with the criminal
4.30 justice system. These appropriations are from
4.31 the Support Our Troops account in the special
4.32 revenue fund. This is a onetime appropriation
4.33 and is not added to the base.

4.34 **Veterans Journey Home; Appropriation.**
4.35 \$90,000 in fiscal year 2018 and \$85,000 in

5.1 fiscal year 2019 are for a grant to the Veterans
 5.2 Journey Home. The Veterans Journey Home
 5.3 must use the grant money to support the
 5.4 development of new or rehabbed affordable
 5.5 housing dedicated for low-to-moderate income
 5.6 veterans and their families. These
 5.7 appropriations are from the Support Our
 5.8 Troops account in the special revenue fund.
 5.9 This is a onetime appropriation and is not
 5.10 added to the base.

5.11 **Subd. 3. Veterans Homes** 57,218,000 57,218,000

5.12 **Veterans Homes Special Revenue Account.**

5.13 The general fund appropriations made to the
 5.14 department may be transferred to a veterans
 5.15 homes special revenue account in the special
 5.16 revenue fund in the same manner as other
 5.17 receipts are deposited according to Minnesota
 5.18 Statutes, section 198.34, and are appropriated
 5.19 to the department for the operation of veterans
 5.20 homes facilities and programs.

5.21 **Maximize Federal Reimbursements.** The
 5.22 department will seek opportunities to
 5.23 maximize federal reimbursements of
 5.24 Medicare-eligible expenses and will provide
 5.25 annual reports to the commissioner of
 5.26 management and budget on the federal
 5.27 Medicare reimbursements received.
 5.28 Contingent upon future federal Medicare
 5.29 receipts, reductions to the homes' general fund
 5.30 appropriation may be made.

5.31 **Sec. 4. MILITARY AFFAIRS; TRANSFER**
 5.32 **AUTHORITY**

5.33 Of the funds transferred to maintenance of
 5.34 training facilities in Laws 2015, chapter 77,

6.1 article 1, section 36, subdivision 4, \$2,000,000
 6.2 in fiscal year 2017 may be transferred to the
 6.3 enlistment incentives appropriation to address
 6.4 a projected fiscal year 2017 deficit in the
 6.5 enlistment incentives program.

6.6 **ARTICLE 2**

6.7 **MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

6.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 190.19, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

6.9 Subd. 2. **Uses.** (a) Money appropriated from the Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account
 6.10 to the Department of Military Affairs may be used for:

6.11 (1) grants directly to eligible individuals;

6.12 (2) grants to one or more eligible foundations for the purpose of making grants to eligible
 6.13 individuals, as provided in this section;

6.14 (3) veterans' services; ~~or~~

6.15 (4) grants to family readiness groups chartered by the adjutant general; or

6.16 (5) up to \$500,000 per fiscal year for bonus programs as defined in section 192.501.

6.17 (b) As used in paragraph (a), the term "eligible individual" includes any person who is:

6.18 (1) a member in good standing of the Minnesota National Guard or a reserve unit based
 6.19 in Minnesota ~~who has been called to active service as defined in section 190.05, subdivision~~
 6.20 ~~5;~~

6.21 (2) a Minnesota resident who is a member of a military reserve unit not based in
 6.22 Minnesota, if the member is called to active service as defined in section 190.05, subdivision
 6.23 5;

6.24 (3) any other Minnesota resident performing active service for any branch of the military
 6.25 of the United States;

6.26 (4) a person who honorably served in one of the capacities listed in clause (1), (2), or
 6.27 (3) who has current financial needs ~~directly related to that service;~~ and

6.28 (5) a member of the immediate family of an individual identified in clause (1), (2), (3),
 6.29 or (4). For purposes of this clause, "immediate family" means the individual's spouse and
 6.30 minor children and, if they are dependents of the member of the military, the member's
 6.31 parents, grandparents, siblings, stepchildren, and adult children.

7.1 (c) As used in paragraph (a), the term "eligible foundation" includes any organization
7.2 that:

7.3 (1) is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;

7.4 (2) has articles of incorporation under chapter 317A specifying the purpose of the
7.5 organization as including the provision of financial assistance to members of the Minnesota
7.6 National Guard and other United States armed forces reserves and their families and
7.7 survivors; and

7.8 (3) agrees in writing to distribute any grant money received from the adjutant general
7.9 under this section to eligible individuals as defined in this section and in accordance with
7.10 any written policies and rules the adjutant general may impose as conditions of the grant to
7.11 the foundation.

7.12 (d) The maximum grant awarded to an eligible individual under paragraph (a) in a
7.13 calendar year with funds from the Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account, either through
7.14 an eligible institution or directly from the adjutant general, may not exceed ~~\$2,000~~ \$4,000.

7.15 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 190.19, subdivision 2a, is amended to read:

7.16 Subd. 2a. **Uses; veterans.** (a) Money appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs
7.17 from the Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account may be used for:

7.18 (1) grants to veterans service organizations;

7.19 (2) outreach to underserved veterans;

7.20 (3) providing services and programs for veterans and their families;

7.21 (4) transfers to the vehicle services account for Gold Star license plates under section
7.22 168.1253;

7.23 (5) grants of up to \$100,000 to any organization approved by the commissioner of
7.24 veterans affairs for the purpose of supporting and improving the lives of veterans and their
7.25 families; ~~and~~

7.26 (6) grants to an eligible foundation;

7.27 (7) the agency's uncompensated burial costs for eligible dependents to whom the
7.28 commissioner grants a no-fee or reduced-fee burial in the state's veteran cemeteries pursuant
7.29 to section 197.236, subdivision 9, paragraph (b); and

7.30 (8) grants of up to \$3,000 to a disabled veteran to construct disability access
7.31 improvements in or around the disabled veteran's residence.

8.1 (b) For purposes of this subdivision, "eligible foundation" includes any organization
8.2 that:

8.3 (1) is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

8.4 (2) is a nonprofit corporation under chapter 317A and the organization's articles of
8.5 incorporation specify that a purpose of the organization includes: (i) providing assistance
8.6 to veterans and their families; or (ii) enhancing the lives of veterans and their families.

8.7 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 197.236, subdivision 9, is amended to read:

8.8 Subd. 9. **Burial fees.** (a) The commissioner of veterans affairs shall establish a fee
8.9 schedule, which may be adjusted from time to time, for the interment of eligible spouses
8.10 and dependent children. The fees shall cover as nearly as practicable the actual costs of
8.11 interment, excluding the value of the plot.

8.12 (b) Upon application, the commissioner may waive or reduce the burial fee in the case
8.13 of for an indigent eligible person. The commissioner shall develop a policy, eligibility
8.14 standards, and application form for requests to waive or reduce the burial fee to indigent
8.15 eligible applicants.

8.16 (c) No plot or interment fees may be charged for the burial of service members who die
8.17 on active duty or eligible veterans, as defined in United States Code, title 38, section 101,
8.18 paragraph (2).

APPENDIX
Article locations in S1316-1

ARTICLE 1 VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS Page.Ln 1.9
ARTICLE 2 MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY Page.Ln 6.6