

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 77—COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

(ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES)

PREFILED NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Referred to Committee on Government Affairs

SUMMARY—Revises provisions concerning the Department of Veterans Services and certain advisory public bodies relating to veterans. (BDR 37-285)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: Yes.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to veterans; revising the duties of the Director of the Department of Veterans Services; changing the terms of members of certain advisory public bodies relating to veterans; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law requires the Director of the Department of Veterans Services to provide certain services and assist veterans, servicemen and servicewomen and their dependents with problems, situations and questions relating to service for veterans. (NRS 417.090) **Section 1** of this bill additionally requires the Director to: (1) assist veterans experiencing homelessness by connecting veterans to housing and other support organizations; and (2) create, coordinate and support veterans suicide prevention programs and resources.

Existing law creates the Nevada Veterans Services Commission, which is made up of former members of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the Legislature and members of the general public who meet certain qualifications. (NRS 417.150) Existing law requires the Commission to advise, make recommendations and submit reports to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, the Governor and the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs regarding issues relating to veterans (NRS 417.190) **Section 2** of this bill increases the length of a term for a member of the Commission from 2 years to 3 years.

Existing law creates the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada and the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada, which are made up of members of the Legislature and certain veterans' organizations. Existing law requires the Advisory Committees to consult



with the Director of the Department of Veterans Services regarding the establishment, maintenance and operation of the veterans' cemetery for which the Committee was created. (NRS 417.230) **Section 3** of this bill increases the length of a term for a member of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada or the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada from 2 years to 3 years.

Existing law creates the Women Veterans Advisory Committee, which is made up of former members of the Armed Forces of the United States, and requires the Women Veterans Advisory Committee to provide support and assistance to the Department regarding issues related to women veterans. (NRS 417.320, 417.330) **Section 4** of this bill decreases the length of a term for a member of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee from 4 years to 3 years.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. NRS 417.090 is hereby amended to read as follows:
417.090 1. The Director shall:

(a) Assist veterans, and those presently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States who are residents of the State of Nevada, their spouses, domestic partners, widows, widowers, children, dependents, administrators, executors and personal representatives, in preparing, submitting and presenting any claim against the United States, or any state, for adjusted compensation, insurance, pension, disability compensation, vocational training, education, rehabilitation or any other benefit to which they may be entitled under the laws of the United States or of any of the states, and assist them in obtaining any aid or benefit to which they may be entitled under the laws of the United States or of any of the states.

(b) Aid, assist, encourage and cooperate with every service organization recognized nationally or in this State insofar as the activities of such organizations are for the benefit of veterans, servicemen and servicewomen and the spouses, domestic partners, widows, widowers, children, dependents, administrators, executors or personal representatives of such veterans, servicemen and servicewomen.

(c) Give aid, assistance and counsel to each and every problem, question and situation, individual as well as collective, affecting any veteran, serviceman or servicewoman, or their dependents, or any group of veterans, servicemen and servicewomen, when in their opinion such comes within the scope of this chapter.

(d) Coordinate activities of veterans' organizations.

(e) Serve as a clearinghouse and disseminate information relating to veterans' benefits.

(f) Conduct any studies which will assist veterans to obtain compensation, insurance, pension, disability compensation,



vocational training, education, rehabilitation or any other benefit to which veterans may be entitled under the laws of the United States or of any state.

(g) Aid, assist and cooperate with the office of coordinator of services for veterans created in a county pursuant to NRS 244.401.

(h) Take possession of any abandoned or unclaimed artifacts or other property that has military or historical value for safekeeping. The Director may:

(1) Transfer such an artifact or other property to:

(I) The Nevada State Museum or the Nevada Historical Society, upon its written request, if the artifact or other property has, in the opinion of the requesting institution, historical value and is worthy of preservation; or

(II) Any other governmental agency or nonprofit entity, including, without limitation, a veterans' organization and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, upon its written request, if the artifact or other property was not requested by the Nevada State Museum or the Nevada Historical Society; or

(2) Destroy or otherwise dispose of the artifact or other property.

➡ An action may not be maintained by any person against the holder or former holder of an artifact or other property because of the transfer, destruction or other disposal of the artifact or other property pursuant to this paragraph.

(i) Develop plans and programs to assist veterans who have suffered sexual trauma while on active duty or during military training.

(j) Create and maintain a statewide database of information relating to veterans to assist the Department in identifying and communicating with veterans and connecting veterans with benefits and opportunities for which they are eligible.

(k) Create and maintain a registry of governmental agencies and private entities that provide services and resources to veterans, service members and their families and publish a digital copy of the registry on the Internet website maintained by the Department.

(l) Ensure that each generation of veterans is recognized annually through a ceremony, information campaign or other form of public acknowledgment.

(m) Establish, operate and maintain veterans' cemeteries in this State, and may, within the limits of legislative authorization, employ personnel and purchase equipment and supplies necessary for the operation and maintenance of the cemeteries.

(n) Establish, manage, maintain and operate veterans' homes in this State, and may, within the limits of legislative authorization,



1 employ personnel and purchase equipment and supplies necessary
2 for the operation and maintenance of veterans' homes.

3 (o) If the board of county commissioners of any county makes
4 the request required pursuant to subsection 2 of NRS 244.401,
5 provide to the coordinator of services for veterans in the county
6 training and certification as a veterans service officer.

7 (p) If training and certification is requested pursuant to
8 paragraph (o), submit an application, on behalf of the coordinator of
9 services for veterans, to the United States Department of Veterans
10 Affairs for accreditation or official recognition as a veterans service
11 officer.

12 (q) Serve as the primary public advocate for Nevada veterans.

13 (r) Ensure that each person who participates as an advocate for
14 veterans in this State in a volunteer program sponsored by the
15 Department is assigned to a veterans service officer employed by
16 the Department that will offer assistance to the volunteer.

17 (s) Provide semiannual training to each veterans service officer
18 employed by the Department regarding the benefits, services,
19 programs and assistance available to veterans.

20 *(t) Connect veterans experiencing homelessness to housing*
21 *and organizations that provide support in housing and other*
22 *related areas to decrease homelessness among veterans.*

23 *(u) Create, coordinate and support programs and resources for*
24 *the prevention of suicide among veterans, including, without*
25 *limitation, programs and resources to increase knowledge of how*
26 *to recognize the signs of a potentially suicidal veteran and*
27 *resources to which veterans who are potentially suicidal may be*
28 *referred.*

29 2. The Director shall:

30 (a) Establish an internal policy for guidance to employees of the
31 Department regarding the transfer, destruction or other disposal of
32 artifacts and other property pursuant to paragraph (h) of subsection
33 1; and

34 (b) Post the policy on the Internet website maintained by the
35 Department.

36 **Sec. 2.** NRS 417.150 is hereby amended to read as follows:

37 417.150 1. The Nevada Veterans Services Commission,
38 consisting of 11 members, is hereby created.

39 2. The Governor shall appoint:

40 (a) Three members who are representatives of veterans'
41 organizations recognized nationally or in this State and who possess
42 honorable discharges from some branch of the Armed Forces of the
43 United States.

44 (b) One member who is a member of the Women Veterans
45 Advisory Committee created by NRS 417.320.



(c) One member who is enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education in this State in a program for a baccalaureate or higher degree and who possesses an honorable discharge from some branch of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(d) Two members who are representatives of the general public.

3. The Chair of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada and the Chair of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada shall each appoint one member from their respective committees to serve as a member of the Commission. Each member so appointed must be a representative of a veterans' organization recognized nationally or in this State and possess an honorable discharge from some branch of the Armed Forces of the United States.

4. The Majority Leader of the Senate shall appoint one member of the Senate to serve as a member of the Commission.

5. The Speaker of the Assembly shall appoint one member of the Assembly to serve as a member of the Commission.

6. The Governor may remove a member of the Commission at any time for failure to perform his or her duties, malfeasance or other good cause.

7. The term of office of each member is ~~2~~ 3 years.

8. If a vacancy occurs in the membership of those members appointed pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 2, the Governor shall fill the vacancy from among the names of qualified nominees provided to the Governor in writing by the Director.

Sec. 3. NRS 417.230 is hereby amended to read as follows:

417.230 1. There are hereby created the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada and the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada, each consisting of seven members as follows:

(a) One member of the Senate, appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

(b) One member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(c) Five members of veterans' organizations recognized nationally or in this State, appointed by the Governor.

2. The members of the Committees shall serve terms of ~~2~~ 3 years.

3. Each Committee shall annually elect a Chair and a Vice Chair from among its members.

4. Each Committee shall meet at least 4 times a year.

5. Any legislative member of a Committee who is not a candidate for reelection or who is defeated for reelection continues to serve after the general election until the next regular or special session of the Legislature convenes.



6. While engaged in the work of the Committee, each member of each Committee is entitled to receive the per diem allowances and travel expenses provided for state officers and employees generally.

7. The Director shall consult with each Committee regarding the establishment, maintenance and operation of the veterans' cemetery for which the Committee was created.

Sec. 4. NRS 417.320 is hereby amended to read as follows:

417.320 1. The Women Veterans Advisory Committee is hereby created consisting of five members appointed by the Governor, at least three of whom must be women, and all of whom must be former members of the Armed Forces of the United States, including, without limitation, the Nevada Army National Guard and the Nevada Air National Guard, who received, upon severance from service, an honorable discharge. Each member serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

2. In making appointments pursuant to subsection 1, the Governor shall consider:

(a) The recommendations of the Director;

(b) Whether the appointments provide a geographical balance between the urban and rural areas of this State and represent the cultural diversity of this State; and

(c) The level of activity of the person in the veteran community.

3. The Committee shall elect a Chair from among its members.

4. After the initial terms, each member of the Committee appointed pursuant to subsection 1 serves a term of ~~4~~3 years.

5. A vacancy on the Committee must be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

6. The Committee shall meet at least four times per year at the call of the Chair.

7. A majority of the members of the Committee appointed pursuant to subsection 1 constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

8. Each member of the Committee:

(a) Serves without compensation, except that a member of the Committee who is a state officer or employee may receive his or her regular compensation while engaging in the business of the Committee; and

(b) While engaged in the business of the Committee, is entitled to receive the per diem allowance and travel expenses provided for state officers and employees generally.

9. The Department shall provide the personnel, facilities, equipment and supplies required by the Committee.



Sec. 5. 1. The terms of the members of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission appointed pursuant to NRS 417.150, the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada and the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada appointed pursuant to NRS 417.230, and the Women Veterans Advisory Committee appointed pursuant to NRS 417.320 who are incumbent on June 30, 2021, expire on that date.

2. On or before July 1, 2021, the Governor shall:

(a) Reappoint the members of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission who were appointed pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose terms expire on June 30, 2021, or appoint new members to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to terms that commence on July 1, 2021, and expire on June 30, 2022.

(b) Reappoint the members of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission who were appointed pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose terms expire on June 30, 2021, or appoint new members to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to terms that commence on July 1, 2021, and expire on June 30, 2023.

(c) Reappoint the members of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission who were appointed pursuant to paragraph (d) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose terms expire on June 30, 2021, or appoint new members to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to paragraph (d) of subsection 2 of NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to terms that commence on July 1, 2021, and expire on June 30, 2024.

(d) Appoint new members or reappoint members who are incumbent on June 30, 2021, to the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this act, to terms commencing on July 1, 2021, as follows:

(1) One member to a term that expires on June 30, 2022;

(2) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2023; and

(3) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2024.

(e) Appoint new members or reappoint members who are incumbent on June 30, 2021, to the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this act, to terms commencing on July 1, 2021, as follows:



- (1) One member to a term that expires on June 30, 2022;
- (2) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2023; and
- (3) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2024.

(f) Appoint new members or reappoint members who are incumbent on June 30, 2021, to the Women Veterans Advisory Committee created by NRS 417.320, as amended by section 4 of this act, to terms commencing on July 1, 2021, as follows:

- (1) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2022;
- (2) Two members to terms that expire on June 30, 2023; and
- (3) One member to a term that expires on June 30, 2024.

3. On or before July 1, 2021, the Majority Leader of the Senate shall:

(a) Reappoint the member of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission who was appointed pursuant to subsection 4 of NRS 417.150, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to subsection 4 of NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to a term that commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on June 30, 2024.

(b) Reappoint the member of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada who was appointed pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this act, to a term that commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on June 30, 2022.

(c) Reappoint the member of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada who was appointed pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this act, to a term that commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on June 30, 2022.

4. On or before July 1, 2021, the Speaker of the Assembly shall:

(a) Reappoint the member of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission who was appointed pursuant to subsection 5 of NRS 417.150, as that section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to subsection 5 of



1 NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to a term that
2 commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on June 30, 2024.

3 (b) Reappoint the member of the Advisory Committee for a
4 Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada who was appointed
5 pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as that
6 section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on
7 June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Advisory Committee
8 for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada pursuant to paragraph
9 (b) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this
10 act, to a term that commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on
11 June 30, 2022.

12 (c) Reappoint the member of the Advisory Committee for a
13 Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada who was appointed
14 pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as that
15 section existed before July 1, 2021, and whose term expires on
16 June 30, 2021, or appoint a new member to the Advisory Committee
17 for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada pursuant to paragraph
18 (b) of subsection 1 of NRS 417.230, as amended by section 3 of this
19 act, to a term that commences on July 1, 2021, and expires on
20 June 30, 2022.

21 5. As soon as practicable after being elected pursuant to
22 subsection 3 of NRS 417.230 by the members appointed to the
23 Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada
24 or the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern
25 Nevada, as applicable, pursuant to subsections 2, 3 and 4, the Chair
26 of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans Cemetery in Northern
27 Nevada and the Chair of the Advisory Committee for a Veterans
28 Cemetery in Southern Nevada shall each appoint a member to the
29 Nevada Veterans Services Commission pursuant to subsection 3 of
30 NRS 417.150, as amended by section 2 of this act, to a term that
31 expires on June 30, 2023. The members of the Nevada Veterans
32 Services Commission appointed pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS
33 417.150 whose terms expire on June 30, 2021, may be reappointed
34 if those members were reappointed to the Advisory Committee for a
35 Veterans Cemetery in Northern Nevada or the Advisory Committee
36 for a Veterans Cemetery in Southern Nevada, as applicable,
37 pursuant to subsection 2, 3 or 4.

38 **Sec. 6.** 1. This section and section 5 of this act become
39 effective upon passage and approval.

40 2. Sections 1 to 4, inclusive, of this act become effective on
41 July 1, 2021.



