

# HB328 INTRODUCED



1 HB328  
2 Y8FK662-1  
3 By Representative Almond  
4 RFD: Military and Veterans Affairs  
5 First Read: 25-Feb-25



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would establish and provide procedures for the Alabama National Guard Legal Services Office, including various positions within the office and accompanying duties thereof.

This bill would establish and provide procedures for the Alabama National Guard Legal Assistance Program, including various positions within the office and accompanying duties thereof.

This bill would also authorize judge advocates and paralegals to perform notary acts under certain circumstances.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to the Alabama National Guard; to add Chapters 2B and 2C to Title 31 of the Code of Alabama 1975, to establish and provide for the Alabama National Guard Legal Services Office, including positions therein; to establish and provide for the Alabama National Guard Legal Assistance Program, including positions therein; and to authorize judge advocates and paralegals to perform notary actions under



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29 certain circumstances.

30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

31 Section 1. Chapter 2B is added to Title 31 of the Code  
32 of Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

33 §31-2B-1.

34 This chapter establishes and defines the operational  
35 procedures of the Alabama National Guard Legal Services  
36 Office, including the office's composition, mission, and  
37 functions; provides duties and explains policies, objectives,  
38 and procedures for the development and maintenance of the  
39 office; provides duties for the supervision, training,  
40 employment, and administration of personnel; and provides  
41 procedures for acquiring and maintaining office legal research  
42 resources.

43 §31-2B-2.

44 This chapter applies to all judge advocates and  
45 services and personnel thereof at all times, including during  
46 federal service.

47 §31-2B-3.

48 (a) The Alabama National Guard and State Military  
49 Department shall adopt Army Regulation 27-1 and Air Force  
50 Instruction 51-304 as controlling when judge advocates are in  
51 federal service and when not in federal service in an advisory  
52 capacity.

53 (b) This chapter is supplemental and shall not be  
54 construed to abrogate any duties, responsibilities, or  
55 liabilities of judge advocates or legal services personnel.

56 §31-2B-4.



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57 (a) The Legal Services Office shall be a joint office  
58 shared by the Alabama Army and Air National Guard. There shall  
59 be a state staff judge advocate for the Army National Guard  
60 and for the Air National Guard.

61 (b) Each state staff judge advocate shall do all of the  
62 following:

63 (1) Perform the duties as prescribed by the Adjutant  
64 General and state and federal law.

65 (2) Serve as the primary legal adviser to the Adjutant  
66 General regarding the State Military Department and all  
67 officers and agencies of the department.

68 (3) Provide independent legal advice in coordination  
69 with the Office of General Counsel and directly to the  
70 Director of the Joint Staff, chief of staff of each service,  
71 joint staff, and members of the Alabama National Guard,  
72 generally.

73 (4) Provide legal advice in the following areas:

74 a. Military justice.

75 b. Administration and operation of State Military  
76 Department.

77 c. Business, property, and financial operations under  
78 the jurisdiction and authority of the State Military  
79 Department and Armory Commission.

80 d. Administration, control, discipline, status, civil  
81 relations, and activities of all State Military Department  
82 personnel.

83 (5) Provide legal advice to the Adjutant General,  
84 Director of the Joint Staff, chief of staff of each service,



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85 and joint staff in all legal matters concerning the State  
86 Military Department, including environmental law, labor and  
87 civilian personnel law, contract law, and fiscal and tax law.

88 (6) Develop legal office management policies and  
89 procedures to accomplish all legal services within the Alabama  
90 National Guard.

91 (7) Direct the members of the Alabama National Guard  
92 Judge Advocate General Corps in the performance of their  
93 duties, including leading and managing all aspects of the  
94 Legal Service Office.

95 (8) Exercise technical supervision over the delivery of  
96 legal services in the Alabama Army and Air National Guard and  
97 all legal services personnel under the authority of the  
98 Adjutant General.

99 (9) Certify that all judge advocates are professionally  
100 qualified and maintain the highest levels of ethical and moral  
101 behavior and professional proficiency to perform legal duties.

102 (10) Manage the professional legal training within the  
103 Alabama National Guard.

104 (11) Determine the requirements for the Alabama  
105 National Guard's acquisition of legal research materials,  
106 software, applications, and programs.

107 (12) Provide legal services to the Alabama National  
108 Guard through the Legal Services Office and the Office of  
109 General Counsel.

110 (13) Direct the delivery of Alabama Army and Air  
111 National Guard legal services across a broad spectrum of legal  
112 disciplines, including military justice, international and



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113 operational law, administrative and civil law, contract and  
114 fiscal law, claims, and legal assistance.

115 §31-2B-5.

116 (a) Under the direction of the Adjutant General and the  
117 state staff judge advocates, the General Counsel shall do all  
118 of the following:

119 (1) Advise and support the state staff judge advocates  
120 on all judge advocate legal service matters.

121 (2) Advise the Adjutant General, State Military  
122 Department, Governor, chiefs of staff of each service, and  
123 Director of the Joint Staff, as necessary.

124 (3) Serve as Chief Information Officer for the Judge  
125 Advocate General Counsel.

126 (4) Inspect, supervise, and manage judge advocate  
127 activities as directed by the state staff judge advocates.

128 (5) Supervise all Alabama National Guard litigation and  
129 appeals.

130 (6) Supervise and provide advice on all contract and  
131 fiscal issues.

132 (7) Supervise and provide technical guidance regarding  
133 military justice and administrative law.

134 (8) Supervise the Office of General Counsel, including  
135 employment, professional responsibility, and office management  
136 matters.

137 (9) Establish policy and operational guidance for all  
138 aspects of the Legal Services Office.

139 (10) Supervise the Deputy General Counsel, associate  
140 general counsels, deputy staff judge advocates, judge



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141 advocates, all legal services personnel, and others who are  
142 members of the Judge Advocate Legal Services Office to assist  
143 the Office of General Counsel in supporting the state staff  
144 judge advocates.

145 (b) The Office of General Counsel full-time staff shall  
146 include a general counsel, deputy general counsel, chief  
147 paralegal, and associate general counsels.

148 §31-2B-6.

149 The Deputy General Counsel shall do all of the  
150 following:

151 (1) Serve as director for the Legal Services Office,  
152 including military justice, legal assistance, administrative  
153 law, contract and fiscal law, and any other services as  
154 determined and delegated by a state staff judge advocate or  
155 the Office of General Counsel.

156 (2) Coordinate and provide support for all legal  
157 services throughout the Alabama National Guard and the State  
158 Military Department under the direction of the state staff  
159 judge advocates and the Office of General Counsel.

160 (3) Coordinate and support the Alabama National Guard  
161 Army Soldier Readiness Program.

162 (4) Coordinate and provide support for all legal  
163 services training in the Alabama National Guard.

164 (5) Coordinate and supervise all Alabama National Guard  
165 preventative law publications.

166 (6) Provide advice and counsel to Alabama National  
167 Guard SAPR/IPP Offices.

168 (7) Compile and publish the Alabama National Guard



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169 Legal Services Manual upon approval by the state staff judge  
170 advocates.

171 §31-2B-7.

172 The military justice associate general counsel shall do  
173 all of the following:

174 (1) Serve as coordinator of all military justice  
175 matters under the direction of the state staff judge advocates  
176 and as delegated to the Office of General Counsel.

177 (2) Coordinate and provide support to the Chief of  
178 Military Justice and all trial counsels and supporting staff.

179 (3) Provide and supervise all military justice training  
180 throughout the Alabama National Guard.

181 (4) Compile and publish the Alabama Manual for  
182 Court-Martial and any supporting state regulations and manuals  
183 with advice and consent of the state staff judge advocates and  
184 the Chief of Military Justice.

185 §31-2B-8.

186 The contract and fiscal law associate general counsel  
187 shall do all of the following:

188 (1) Serve as coordinator of all contract and fiscal law  
189 matters under the direction of the state staff judge advocates  
190 and as delegated to the Office of General Counsel.

191 (2) Coordinate and provide support to the military  
192 judge advocates assigned to contract and fiscal law sections.

193 (3) Provide and supervise all contract and fiscal law  
194 training throughout the Alabama National Guard.

195 (4) Compile and publish the Alabama Manual for Contract  
196 and Fiscal Law and any supporting rules and manuals with





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197 advice and consent of the state staff judge advocates.

198 §31-2B-9.

199 The administrative and Civil Law Associate General  
200 Counsel shall do all of the following:

201 (1) Serve as coordinator of all administrative and  
202 civil law matters under the direction of the state staff judge  
203 advocates and as delegated to the Office of General Counsel.

204 (2) Coordinate and provide support to the military  
205 judge advocates assigned to administrative and civil law  
206 sections.

207 (3) Provide and supervise all administrative and civil  
208 law training throughout the Alabama National Guard.

209 (4) Compile and publish the Alabama Manual for  
210 Administrative and Civil Law and any supporting rules and  
211 manuals with advice and consent of the state staff judge  
212 advocates.

213 §31-2B-10.

214 The Operational Law Associate General Counsel shall do  
215 all of the following:

216 (1) Serve as coordinator of all operational law matters  
217 under the direction of the state staff judge advocate and as  
218 delegated to the Office of General Counsel.

219 (2) Coordinate and provide support to military judge  
220 advocates assigned to administrative and civil law sections.

221 (3) Provide and supervise all military justice training  
222 throughout the Alabama National Guard.

223 (4) Compile and publish the Alabama Manual for  
224 Operational Law and any supporting rules and manuals with



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225 advice and consent of the state staff judge advocates.

226 §31-2B-11.

227 The Legal Assistance Associate General Counsel shall do  
228 all of the following:

229 (1) Serve as coordinator of all legal assistance  
230 matters under the direction of the state staff judge advocates  
231 and as delegated to the Office of General Counsel.

232 (2) Coordinate and provide support to military judge  
233 advocates assigned to legal services sections.

234 (3) Provide and supervise all legal assistance training  
235 throughout the Alabama National Guard.

236 (4) Compile and publish the Alabama Manual for Legal  
237 Assistance and any supporting rules and manuals with the  
238 advice and consent of the state staff judge advocates.

239 §31-2B-12.

240 (a) Command, Wing, and Brigade Judge Advocates shall  
241 provide legal services to Major Military Commands, including  
242 MACOM, MAJCOM, and Wing in this state through legal offices  
243 and legal sections headed by judge advocates within each  
244 MACOM, MAJCOM, and Wing. Judge advocates shall be members of  
245 MACOM, MAJCOM, and Wing Commanders' Staff and are designated  
246 as supervisory judge advocates.

247 (b) A Supervisory Judge Advocate shall be a judge  
248 advocate within an office or organization with authority over,  
249 or responsibility for, the direction, coordination,  
250 evaluation, or assignment of responsibilities and work of  
251 subordinate lawyers, paralegals, and other non-lawyer  
252 assistants within MACOM, MAJCOM, or Wing.



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253 (c) The supervisory judge advocates shall include the  
254 Command Judge Advocate, Staff Judge Advocate, and the Brigade  
255 Judge Advocate as determined by the placement.

256 (d) The Command Judge Advocate, Staff Judge Advocate,  
257 and Brigade Judge Advocate shall do all of the following:

258 (1) Advise the commander regarding legal matters and  
259 assist the commander in exercising his or her duties as a part  
260 of the commander's personal staff, all under the management  
261 and supervision of the respective state staff judge advocate.

262 (2) Assist the commander in identifying legal problems  
263 and render legal advice in support of the commander's  
264 decision-making process.

265 (3) Furnish legal advice, assistance, and support  
266 across the broad spectrum of military, state, and federal  
267 practice, including administrative law, claims, contract, and  
268 fiscal law, international and operational law, and military  
269 justice; provided, all legal assistance is reserved to the  
270 Legal Services Office unless otherwise determined by a state  
271 staff judge advocate.

272 (4) Be responsible for the efficient, effective, and  
273 ethical delivery of legal services to his or her commanders  
274 and commands.

275 (5) Create and maintain rating and supervisory chains  
276 that comply with applicable Army standards and ensure  
277 effective leadership of all legal personnel of the command  
278 legal office.

279 (6) Ensure legal personnel are adequately trained to  
280 accomplish the legal mission, including through local training



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281 and through attendance at the Judge Advocate Center and School  
282 courses, including that all judge advocate attorneys  
283 accomplish continuing legal education required by the Alabama  
284 State Bar.

285 (7) Appoint and assign duties of the chief paralegal,  
286 trial counsel, and deputy command judge advocate, deputy staff  
287 judge advocate, or deputy brigade judge advocate, as  
288 appropriate, with consent of the state staff judge advocate.

289 (8) Maintain written standard office procedures and  
290 annex to Operation Order for Command.

291 (9) Maintain proper written reports regarding  
292 investigations, separations, and military justice as directed  
293 by the Office of General Counsel and state staff judge  
294 advocate.

295 (10) Publish an office SOP and OPORD Annex for their  
296 respective commands.

297 §31-2B-13.

298 (a) In accordance with Army Regulation 27-1, all  
299 paralegals and warrant officers are under the direction of a  
300 state staff judge advocate with supervision delegated to each  
301 Command Judge Advocate, Staff Judge Advocate, or Brigade Judge  
302 Advocate, as appropriate.

303 (b) Unless directed otherwise by the state staff judge  
304 advocate, all paralegals and warrant officers shall perform  
305 only legal professional duties as outlined in their respective  
306 legal service regulations.

307 §31-2B-14.

308 (a) The Alabama National Guard, commanders, and



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309 supervisory judge advocates shall provide logistical support  
310 for the Legal Services Office, including adequate personnel,  
311 facilities, supplies, and equipment necessary to carry out its  
312 mission and functions in the most professional, efficient, and  
313 effective manner possible.

314 (b) Minimum logistical support shall include all of the  
315 following:

316 (1) Sufficiently private workspace for attorneys and  
317 support staff that ensures freedom from unnecessary  
318 distractions and provides for client confidentiality and  
319 privacy, including a private consultation room.

320 (2) Locking file cabinets to ensure the privacy of  
321 records.

322 (3) Computer hardware and software to maintain client  
323 records; provided, only authorized personnel may have access.

324 (4) A sufficient number of attorneys and qualified  
325 administrative, paralegal, and clerical support personnel to  
326 accomplish workload.

327 (5) Computers for each assigned judge advocate,  
328 paralegal, and legal assistant; software, peripherals,  
329 networking, telecommunication equipment, including nonsecure  
330 Internet protocol router network access and, where required,  
331 secure Internet protocol router network access. Maintenance  
332 and supplies for computer hardware and software, including  
333 training for personnel.

334 (6) Appropriate and private client waiting areas in  
335 legal services and assistance offices.

336 (7) Standard legal office equipment as determined by



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337 technological advancements and by the state staff judge  
338 advocate or the Office of General Counsel.

339 (8) Access to digital libraries, including general  
340 research material and legal services for specialized topics,  
341 including adequate funding and resources for essential access  
342 to computer automated legal research capabilities.

343 (9) Adequate funding for continuing legal education for  
344 all assigned and attached attorneys sufficient to satisfy  
345 requirements of each attorney's primary jurisdiction of bar  
346 membership, including additional specialty or assignment  
347 training for attorneys and support staff.

348 (10) Cellular telephones and similar devices as  
349 determined by the state staff judge advocate or Office of  
350 General Counsel to support legal mission requirements.

351 (11) Adequate transportation support.

352 (c) The management and delivery of legal services in  
353 the Alabama National Guard requires the use and support of  
354 court computer access to software applications, such as:  
355 Jagcnet, Adobe, Word Perfect, Alacourt, Alafile, and federal  
356 court litigation access.

357 Section 2. Chapter 2C is added to Title 31 of the Code  
358 of Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

359 §31-2C-1.

360 This chapter provides policies, roles,  
361 responsibilities, and procedures for the Alabama National  
362 Guard Legal Assistance Program. This chapter shall not be  
363 construed to create any substantive or procedural right  
364 against this state or the United States, or any agencies or



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365 officers thereof, or any other person.

366 §31-2C-2.

367 (a) The Legal Assistance Program shall be modeled after  
368 Army Regulation 27-3, Air Force Instruction 51-304, and Air  
369 National Guard Instruction 51-504. When not in federal service  
370 these federal regulations shall be advisory and not  
371 controlling and any inconsistencies shall be resolved in favor  
372 of state law and rules. This chapter shall be applicable to  
373 all judge advocates at all times, even when in federal  
374 service. For any conflict between this chapter and federal law  
375 or rule during federal service, federal service regulations  
376 shall control.

377 (b) Nothing in this chapter shall abrogate any duties,  
378 responsibilities, or liabilities of judge advocates or  
379 personnel under Alabama National Guard shall incorporate Army  
380 Regulation 27-3, Air Force Instruction 51-304, and Air  
381 National Guard Instruction 51-504.

382 §31-2C-3.

383 (a) The mission of the Legal Assistance Program is to  
384 assist eligible clients with managing their personal legal  
385 affairs in a timely and professional manner by doing all of  
386 the following:

387 (1) Meeting clients' needs for information on personal  
388 legal matters.

389 (2) Resolving clients' personal legal problems whenever  
390 possible.

391 (b) The Legal Assistance Program shall be under the  
392 direction of the Adjutant General. The mission of the Legal



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393 Assistance Program is based on military needs of readiness,  
394 morale, discipline, and retention according to the following:

395 (1) Readiness. Because soldiers, airmen, and  
396 emergency-essential Department of Defense civilian employees  
397 must be prepared for immediate mobilization and deployment,  
398 their personal legal affairs must be in order at all times.

399 (2) Morale. Fostering high morale of soldiers, airmen,  
400 and their families is an important aspect of readiness. High  
401 morale is enhanced by providing soldiers, airmen, and their  
402 families information, advice, and assistance responsive to  
403 their personal legal needs and problems.

404 (3) Discipline. Personal legal difficulties may cause  
405 low morale and disciplinary problems and may adversely affect  
406 combat readiness. Prompt legal assistance in resolving these  
407 difficulties is an effective preventive law measure.

408 (4) Quality. Providing legal assistance is part of the  
409 Alabama National Guard's ongoing effort to maintain a quality  
410 of life that will attract quality people. The Alabama National  
411 Guard must take care of its own if it is to recruit and retain  
412 a quality force.

413 (5) Retention. In order to retain service members, it  
414 is the mission of the Alabama National Guard legal assistance  
415 program to assist service members with legal matters on a no  
416 cost basis to promote retention.

417 §31-2C-4.

418 (a) The Alabama Staff Judge Advocate for the Alabama  
419 Army and Air National Guard shall do all of the following:

420 (1) Maintain ultimate responsibility for the overall





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421 supervision and administration of the Legal Assistance  
422 Program.

423 (2) Through the Director of Legal Services within the  
424 Office of General Counsel:

425 a. Execute program director responsibilities for the  
426 Legal Assistance Program;

427 b. Exercise technical oversight over judge advocates  
428 and civilian attorneys serving in the Legal Assistance  
429 Program;

430 c. Provide technical guidance over attorneys serving as  
431 Alabama National Guard/NGB Special Victims' Counsel; and

432 d. Develop policies and procedures for the Legal  
433 Assistance Program's Manual of Legal Assistance.

434 (b) The MACOM Judge Advocate Office shall provide legal  
435 assistance if they have a separate legal assistance judge  
436 advocate. Otherwise, the Legal Services Office, through the  
437 Legal Assistance Program, shall advise and counsel all legal  
438 services issues within MACOMs. MACOM judge advocates may  
439 provide emergency legal assistance, if approved by the  
440 Director of Legal Services.

441 §31-2C-5.

442 The Alabama National Guard legal assistance associate  
443 general counsel shall be responsible for legal assistance  
444 services in the Alabama National Guard and State Military  
445 Department, and shall do all of the following:

446 (1) Provide legal assistance services pursuant to Army  
447 Regulation 27-3, Air Force Instruction 51-304, and Air  
448 National Guard Instruction 51-504, and as may be directed or



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449 limited by the state staff judge advocate.

450 (2) Formulate and publish an Alabama National Guard  
451 Manual for Legal Assistance, to be updated annually.

452 (3) Ensure proper planning and coordination for Soldier  
453 Readiness Program legal support.

454 (4) Secure adequate facilities, equipment, supplies,  
455 and personnel for the provision of legal assistance services.

456 (5) Coordinate, draft, publish, and execute preventive  
457 legal assistance initiatives and services that meet the needs  
458 of the Alabama National Guard and its respective commands.

459 (6) Establish, where appropriate, any consistent  
460 limitations to accomplish the mission of the Legal Services  
461 Office.

462 (7) Maintain up-to-date legal trackers of clients and  
463 services for the Legal Services Office.

464 §31-2C-6.

465 Unless inconsistent with superior orders or other  
466 duties or responsibilities, all of the following are  
467 authorized to provide legal assistance:

468 (1) Judge advocates and personnel supporting the Legal  
469 Services Office under the authority of the Adjutant General  
470 and state staff judge advocates.

471 (2) Judge advocates and personnel supporting the Army  
472 and Air National Guard under Army Regulation 27-3, Air Force  
473 Instruction 51-304, and Air National Guard Instruction 51-504.

474 (3) State and Department of Defense civilian attorneys  
475 and judge advocates as approved by the state staff judge  
476 advocates.



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477 (4) Staff judge advocates and Office of General Counsel  
478 interns or externs under the supervision of the state staff  
479 judge advocate or Office of General Counsel.

480 §31-2C-7.

481 (a) The Legal Services Office along with designated  
482 supervisory judge advocates shall ensure that all attorneys  
483 and non-lawyer assistants providing legal services develop and  
484 maintain the requisite level of competency required by the  
485 Alabama State Bar, state rules, and federal regulations that  
486 apply to judge advocates.

487 (b) The legal assistance associate general counsel  
488 shall ensure all of the following:

489 (1) All judge advocates and attorneys under his or her  
490 supervision receive continuing legal education in the areas of  
491 law, policy, and professional responsibility relevant to legal  
492 assistance. Training should take advantage of courses  
493 sponsored by state and federal government agencies; national,  
494 state, and local bar associations; and the Judge Advocate  
495 Center and School.

496 (2) The Legal Services Office periodically conducts  
497 training covering the laws affecting legal assistance cases in  
498 coordination with local bar associations, legal aid offices,  
499 local practitioners, and relevant state and local government  
500 agencies.

501 (3) Paralegal specialists, office intake personnel, and  
502 receptionists receive training and instructions on  
503 safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of client  
504 information, conflicts of interest, reporting procedures for



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505 violations of the standards, and other professional  
506 responsibility topics related to legal assistance.  
507 Participation in local legal assistance training shall be  
508 encouraged. Supervisory lawyers should encourage and support  
509 participation in the Army's Paralegal Degree Program for all  
510 paralegal soldiers.

511 (4) Other attorneys who may be called to perform legal  
512 assistance duties receive appropriate training in legal  
513 assistance.

514 §31-2C-8.

515 Eligible clients of the Legal Assistance Program,  
516 subject to the limitations described herein, include all of  
517 the following:

518 (1) Alabama Army and Air National Guard members,  
519 employees, retirees, and their dependents. Retired members of  
520 the Alabama National Guard are those retirees who are entitled  
521 to or are receiving military retirement pay, including  
522 individuals on the temporary disability retired list.

523 (2) The legal assistance associate general counsel,  
524 with the advice and consent of the state staff judge  
525 advocates, may limit legal assistance in times of emergencies  
526 or to certain categories of cases based on availability of  
527 expertise or resources.

528 (3) Dependents of eligible individuals identified  
529 herein. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "dependent"  
530 has the same meaning as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 1072.

531 (4) Surviving dependents of eligible individuals as  
532 identified herein who would be eligible for legal assistance,



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533 if the service member or retired member were alive.

534 §31-2C-9.

535 The Adjutant General or a state staff judge advocate  
536 may limit or expand the Legal Assistance Program depending on  
537 the space, facilities, or personnel available and the nature  
538 and scope of services needed.

539 §31-2C-10.

540 Preventive law services are an integral part of the  
541 Legal Assistance Program as defined in Army Regulation 27-1  
542 and Air Force Instruction 51-304, the purpose of which is to  
543 assist and educate Alabama National Guard members, employees,  
544 retirees, and dependents about their legal rights, privileges,  
545 and responsibilities. The Alabama National Guard Legal  
546 Assistance Program shall strive to work with state agencies,  
547 local and state bar associations, and community leaders on the  
548 most pressing legal issues to best address any issues and to  
549 disseminate legal information to assist eligible persons in  
550 making sound legal decisions.

551 §31-2C-11.

552 (a) The Legal Assistance Program shall include a  
553 Preventative Law Program that does all of the following:

554 (1) Publishes one or more preventative law publications  
555 per quarter and distributes the publications via any medium  
556 easily accessible to eligible clients.

557 (2) Participates in command newcomer orientation  
558 briefings, professional development programs, general military  
559 training, other unit education programs, and family readiness  
560 group presentations. Attorneys and paralegals are encouraged



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561 to sponsor and participate in lectures, seminars, forums, and  
562 meetings that inform soldiers, family members, and retirees  
563 about legal problems and issues.

564 (3) Maintains a legal assistance website or social  
565 media presence that contains information on the office hours,  
566 location, and services available. Legal assistance offices are  
567 encouraged to disseminate preventative law materials on these  
568 sites. All published material must be reviewed and updated at  
569 least quarterly to ensure accuracy.

570 (4) Makes preventive law handouts available in waiting  
571 rooms and other appropriate locations.

572 (b) In addition to taking the above measures to educate  
573 soldiers and their family members, the Preventative Law  
574 Program shall employ the following measures to prevent future  
575 legal issues:

576 (1) Identify landlords and other businesses that take  
577 unfair advantage of soldiers and family members and coordinate  
578 with local installation housing referral offices, local Armed  
579 Forces Disciplinary Control Boards, and local, state, and  
580 federal consumer protection agencies to develop procedures to  
581 enforce fair business practices.

582 (2) Assess whether changes in law or regulation could  
583 prevent common legal problems and make regulatory or  
584 legislative suggestions to initiate those changes.  
585 Recommendations for changes to federal law, regulations, or  
586 other policy should be forwarded to the Alabama National Guard  
587 Legal Services Office.

588 §31-2C-12.



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589 (a) The scope of Alabama National Guard legal services  
590 is limited to the types of cases, matters, and services as  
591 defined and outlined in Army Regulation 27-3, Air Force  
592 Instruction 51-304, and Army National Guard Instruction  
593 51-504.

594 (b) The Alabama National Guard Legal Services Office  
595 may limit or expand any services depending on expertise,  
596 resources, and personnel.

597 (c) Legal assistance services are provided at no cost  
598 to a client; however, the Alabama National Guard Legal  
599 Services Office is not responsible for any costs associated  
600 with a client's legal matter, including, but not limited to,  
601 court fees, charges, filing fees, discovery fees, application  
602 fees, appeal bonds, fines, civilian or private attorney fees,  
603 or any other costs.

604 §31-2C-13.

605 (a) All judge advocates providing legal assistance must  
606 obtain and hold an occupational license from the Alabama State  
607 Bar, or, with exception and approval of a state staff judge  
608 advocate, from another state bar under which the judge  
609 advocate is licensed. Further, judge advocates should  
610 establish and maintain a liaison with national, state, and  
611 local bar organizations. Membership in professional  
612 organizations, especially local branches involved in providing  
613 legal services pertinent to the military community and  
614 attendance at professional meetings and seminars is  
615 encouraged.

616 (b) Upon receipt of necessary approval by a state staff



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617 judge advocate, judge advocates and personnel may obtain  
618 reimbursement of license fees and any necessary fees  
619 associated with continuing legal education or membership in  
620 local or state bar associations.

621 (c) Legal assistance attorneys are encouraged to  
622 provide presentations to their civilian counterparts on  
623 military legal assistance issues.

624 (d) The Legal Services Office shall work to incorporate  
625 the purposes of the Military Law Committee with coordination  
626 between the Alabama State Bar and local bar associations  
627 regarding military legal services, referral services, and  
628 legal issues within this state.

629 §31-2C-14.

630 Nothing in this chapter shall affect the standards of  
631 professional conduct required by the United States Army,  
632 United States Air Force, National Guard Bureau, or the Alabama  
633 State Bar, nor shall it expand any services of the Legal  
634 Services Office or personnel, outside of the scope and  
635 liability protections of the applicable service regulations.  
636 All functions under this chapter and Chapter 2B and all other  
637 activities relating to the Legal Services Office are  
638 governmental functions for defense and security of Alabama  
639 State Military Forces.

640 §31-2C-15.

641 (a) Judge advocates and paralegals while performing  
642 duties under Title 10 or Title 32, U.S.C., may perform  
643 notarial acts, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1044a, or if qualified  
644 as a notary public under state law.





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645 (b) Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1044a, judge advocates,  
646 even when not in a duty status, have the general powers of a  
647 notary public in the performance of all notarial acts.

648 (c) Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1044a(b)(4), Alabama  
649 National Guard paralegals have the general powers of a notary  
650 public in the performance of all notarial acts, even when in a  
651 non-duty status.

652 (d) Judge advocates and paralegals may use a seal or  
653 stamp citing the authority under 10 U.S.C. § 1044a when  
654 performing notarial acts.

655 (e) The cost of a state notary public commission, if  
656 required by a state staff judge advocate, may be reimbursed  
657 upon his or her approval.

658 (f) Civilian employee notaries may perform these  
659 services within the limits of the commission under the rules  
660 for the jurisdiction. No fees may be charged for these notary  
661 services.

662 (g) All actions of military notaries qualified under 10  
663 U.S.C. § 1044a are valid and enforceable in this state.

664 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October  
665 1, 2025.