

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2417 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY BOROWSKI, McNEILL, GIRAL, GUENST, DELLOSO, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, BOYD, HADDOCK, DALEY AND GREEN, JUNE 13, 2024

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in the Adjutant General, further
3 providing for appointment of Adjutant General, deputies and
4 assistants and for general powers and duties of Adjutant
5 General; in State Veterans' Commission and Deputy Adjutant
6 General for Veterans' Affairs, further providing for State
7 Veterans' Commission, for Deputy Adjutant General for
8 Veterans' Affairs, for qualifications and status, for
9 specific duties and for accreditation; in veterans'
10 organizations, further providing for grants to veterans'
11 service officer programs; and making editorial changes.

12 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
13 hereby enacts as follows:

14 Section 1. Sections 901(a) and 902 introductory paragraph
15 and (12), Chapter 17 heading, section 1702(b) (1) and (2)
16 introductory paragraph, (c) and (e), Subchapter B heading of
17 Chapter 17 and sections 1711, 1712, 1731(c) (5) (i) and (d)
18 introductory paragraph and 9304(h) introductory paragraph and
19 (j) of Title 51 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes are
20 amended to read:

21 § 901. Appointment of Adjutant General, deputies and

1 assistants.

2 (a) Appointment.--The Governor shall appoint the Adjutant
3 General with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Adjutant
4 General may appoint a Deputy Adjutant General for Army and a
5 Deputy Adjutant General for Air, and such other Deputy
6 Secretaries, Deputy Adjutants General and Assistant Adjutants
7 General as in [his] the Adjutant General's discretion are needed
8 for the efficient functioning of the department. The positions
9 of Assistant Adjutant General, Army, and Assistant Adjutant
10 General, Air, in the grades of brigadier general or major
11 general, shall be authorized. Deputy Adjutants General and such
12 additional Assistant Adjutants General as may be required may
13 also have at least the rank of brigadier general in the
14 Pennsylvania National Guard or Pennsylvania Guard after
15 appointment.

16 * * *

17 § 902. General powers and duties of Adjutant General.

18 The Adjutant General as head of the department is responsible
19 to the Commonwealth and to the Governor for the organization and
20 functioning of said department, and the performance and carrying
21 out of all the duties, powers and responsibilities given or
22 delegated. In addition [he] the Adjutant General is hereby
23 authorized and directed to:

24 * * *

25 (12) Appoint a Deputy [Adjutant General] Secretary for
26 Veterans' Affairs, who shall serve as the Director of the
27 Bureau for Veterans' Affairs.

28 * * *

29 CHAPTER 17

30 STATE VETERANS' COMMISSION

1 AND DEPUTY [ADJUTANT GENERAL] SECRETARY

2 FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

3 § 1702. State Veterans' Commission.

4 * * *

5 (b) Composition.--The commission shall be composed of:

6 (1) The Adjutant General, ex officio, or [his] a
7 designee.

8 (2) The State commander, commandant or head, or [his] a
9 designee, of each of the following named veterans'
10 organizations:

11 * * *

12 (c) Officers.--The commission shall annually elect a
13 [chairman] chairperson and vice [chairman] chairperson at the
14 first meeting of the commission after October 1. The Deputy
15 [Adjutant General] Secretary for Veterans' Affairs shall serve
16 as the executive secretary to the commission.

17 * * *

18 (e) Meetings and quorum.--The commission shall meet upon the
19 call of the [chairman] chairperson or the Adjutant General. Nine
20 members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

21 * * *

22 SUBCHAPTER B

23 DEPUTY [ADJUTANT GENERAL] SECRETARY

24 FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

25 § 1711. Qualifications and status.

26 (a) Deputy [Adjutants General] Secretary.--In addition to
27 such other Deputy Adjutants General as may be named in the
28 department, there shall be a Deputy [Adjutant General] Secretary
29 for Veterans' Affairs, who shall perform the duties under
30 section 1712 (relating to specific duties) and such other duties

1 as the Adjutant General may assign.

2 [(b) Appointment.--The Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans'
3 Affairs shall be selected and appointed as other Deputy
4 Adjutants General are selected and appointed. He shall be a
5 veteran and an active member of at least one of the veterans'
6 organizations listed under section 1702(b) (relating to State
7 Veterans' Commission).]

8 (b) Appointment.--The Deputy Secretary for Veterans' Affairs
9 shall be selected and appointed by the Adjutant General. To be
10 eligible for appointment under this subsection, the individual
11 must:

12 (1) Be a veteran of the armed forces of the United
13 States, which shall include the National Guard of any state
14 or territory of the United States and other reserve
15 components of the United States military.

16 (2) Have demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the
17 Adjutant General, successful executive leadership in an
18 organization.

19 (3) Have attained the necessary educational requirements
20 to fulfill the requirements of the position as determined by
21 the Adjutant General.

22 (4) Have experience with services and benefits for
23 veterans or experience working in a nonprofit setting
24 providing outreach services or long-term care.

25 (5) Have any other qualifications as the Adjutant
26 General may deem necessary to fulfill the duties outlined in
27 section 1712 (relating to specific duties).

28 (c) Compensation.--The compensation of the Deputy [Adjutant
29 General] Secretary for Veterans' Affairs shall be as established
30 by law.

1 [(d) Status.--The Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans'
2 Affairs shall be accorded all the rights, emoluments and
3 privileges, except pay and allowances, of a brigadier general in
4 the Pennsylvania Guard and shall be addressed as "General."]

5 § 1712. Specific duties.

6 In addition to such other duties as may be provided by law or
7 as assigned by the Adjutant General, the Deputy [Adjutant
8 General] Secretary for Veterans' Affairs shall have the
9 following specific duties:

10 (1) To recommend to the Adjutant General and the
11 Governor, with the advice of the State Veterans' Commission,
12 new legislation and amendments to existing statutes
13 concerning veterans and their activities for consideration by
14 the General Assembly.

15 (2) To cooperate with all Federal and State departments
16 and agencies in the interest of veterans.

17 (3) To aid in filing and prosecuting claims of
18 Pennsylvania's veterans and their dependents under Federal or
19 State laws or regulations.

20 (4) To aid veterans in seeking employment or
21 reemployment after their honorable discharge from the armed
22 forces of the United States.

23 (5) To aid veterans requiring medical care in securing
24 hospitalization provided by a Federal or State medical or
25 care facility.

26 (6) To aid in the rehabilitation of injured, wounded or
27 compensable veterans in educational institutions or
28 vocational training institutions for which they may be
29 eligible by law.

30 (7) To cooperate with and advise the Department of

1 Education with respect to vocational training programs for
2 veterans, particularly programs suited to casualties.

3 (8) To administer relief provided by the Commonwealth
4 for veterans and their dependents.

5 (9) To administer the distribution under the direction
6 of the Adjutant General of any compensation to veterans or
7 their dependents that has been or may be granted by the
8 Commonwealth.

9 (10) To investigate the work of other State agencies in
10 administering laws affecting veterans and their dependents.

11 (11) To investigate, compile and maintain complete and
12 accurate data concerning veterans of the armed forces of the
13 United States and all State and municipal activities related
14 thereto.

15 (12) To compile from the records transmitted from the
16 various counties of this Commonwealth a record of the burial
17 places in this Commonwealth of deceased veterans, including
18 such information as the Deputy [Adjutant General] Secretary
19 for Veterans' Affairs or [his] a designee deems necessary and
20 appropriate.

21 (13) To disseminate information concerning
22 Pennsylvania's veterans and Pennsylvania's veterans' programs
23 to veterans' organizations, to the public press and other
24 media and to the general public.

25 (14) To biannually submit, through the Adjutant General,
26 to the Governor a report of State activities on behalf of
27 veterans.

28 (15) To serve as a clearinghouse for all problems or
29 issues related to Pennsylvania's veterans and their
30 dependents.

1 (16) To serve as Executive Secretary of the State
2 Veterans' Commission.

3 § 1731. Accreditation.

4 * * *

5 (c) Additional duties.--In addition to the duties provided
6 for under a statute other than this title, a director of
7 veterans affairs shall do all of the following:

8 * * *

9 (5) Participate in programs provided by the department,
10 including:

11 (i) Annual training and refresher courses provided
12 by the Office of the Deputy [Adjutant General] Secretary
13 for Veterans' Affairs.

14 * * *

15 (d) Office duties.--The Office of the Deputy [Adjutant
16 General] Secretary for Veterans' Affairs shall establish a
17 county director of veterans affairs training program, agreed
18 upon with the State Association of County Directors of Veterans
19 Affairs, which shall include the following:

20 * * *

21 § 9304. Grants to veterans' service officer programs.

22 * * *

23 (h) Reporting requirements.--On or before October 1 of each
24 year, designated veterans' service organizations participating
25 in the program established by this section shall file a written
26 report with the Adjutant General and the Deputy [Adjutant
27 General] Secretary for Veterans' Affairs and send copies to the
28 [chairman] chairperson and minority [chairman] chairperson of
29 the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the
30 Senate and the [chairman] chairperson and minority [chairman]

1 chairperson of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness
2 Committee of the House of Representatives and State Veterans'
3 Commission. The report shall contain the following information:

4 * * *

5 (j) Audits.--The department or the Auditor General may
6 conduct such audits and reviews of the grant program hereby
7 established as the department or the Auditor General determines
8 to be necessary or appropriate. Copies of all audit reports or
9 reviews conducted by the department or the Auditor General shall
10 be made available to the [chairman] chairperson and minority
11 [chairman] chairperson of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency
12 Preparedness Committee of the Senate and the [chairman]
13 chairperson and minority [chairman] chairperson of the Veterans
14 Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the House of
15 Representatives.

16 Section 2. This act shall take effect as follows:

17 (1) The amendment of the following shall take effect
18 upon the first vacancy of the office of Deputy Adjutant
19 General for Veterans' Affairs following the effective date of
20 paragraph (2):

21 (i) Chapter 17 heading.

22 (ii) Section 1702(b)(1) and (2) introductory
23 paragraph, (c) and (e).

24 (iii) Subchapter B heading of Chapter 17.

25 (IV) SECTION 1711. <--

26 (V) SECTION 1712.

27 ~~(iv)~~ (VI) Section 1731(c)(5)(i) and (d) introductory <--
28 paragraph.

29 (2) The remainder of this act shall take effect
30 immediately.