

AN ACT in relation to veterans.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act is amended by adding Section 15 as follows:

(20 ILCS 2805/15 new)

Sec. 15. Veterans advisory council.

(a) A veterans advisory council shall be established in the State of Illinois. The council shall consist of at least 17 members as follows:

(1) Four members of the General Assembly, appointed one each by the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, preferably from a legislative or representative district in which a State-operated veterans home is located.

(2) Six veterans appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(3) One veteran appointed by the commander or president of each veterans service organization that is chartered by the federal government and by the State of Illinois and elects to appoint a member.

No member of the council shall be an employee or representative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Members of the council shall serve without compensation or reimbursement.

(b) At the initial meeting of the council, the members shall elect from among themselves a chairman. The members shall draw lots to determine the length of their terms so that 9 members have terms that expire on July 1, 2005 and the remaining members have terms that expire on July 1, 2006. Thereafter, all members of the council shall be appointed for

terms of 2 years.

The appointing authority may at any time make an appointment to fill a vacancy for the unexpired term of a member.

(c) The council shall meet quarterly or at the call of the chairman or at the call of the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Governor. The Department shall provide meeting space and clerical and administrative support services for the council.

(d) The council has the power to do the following:

(1) Advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs with respect to the fulfillment of its statutory duties.

(2) Review and study the issues and concerns that are most significant to Illinois veterans and advise the Department on those issues and concerns.

(3) Receive a report from the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director's designee at each meeting with respect to the general activities of the Department.

(4) Report to the Governor and the General Assembly annually describing the issues addressed and the actions taken by the council during the year as well as any recommendations for future action.

(e) The council established under this Section replaces any Illinois Veterans Advisory Council established under Executive Order No. 3 (1982).

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2004.